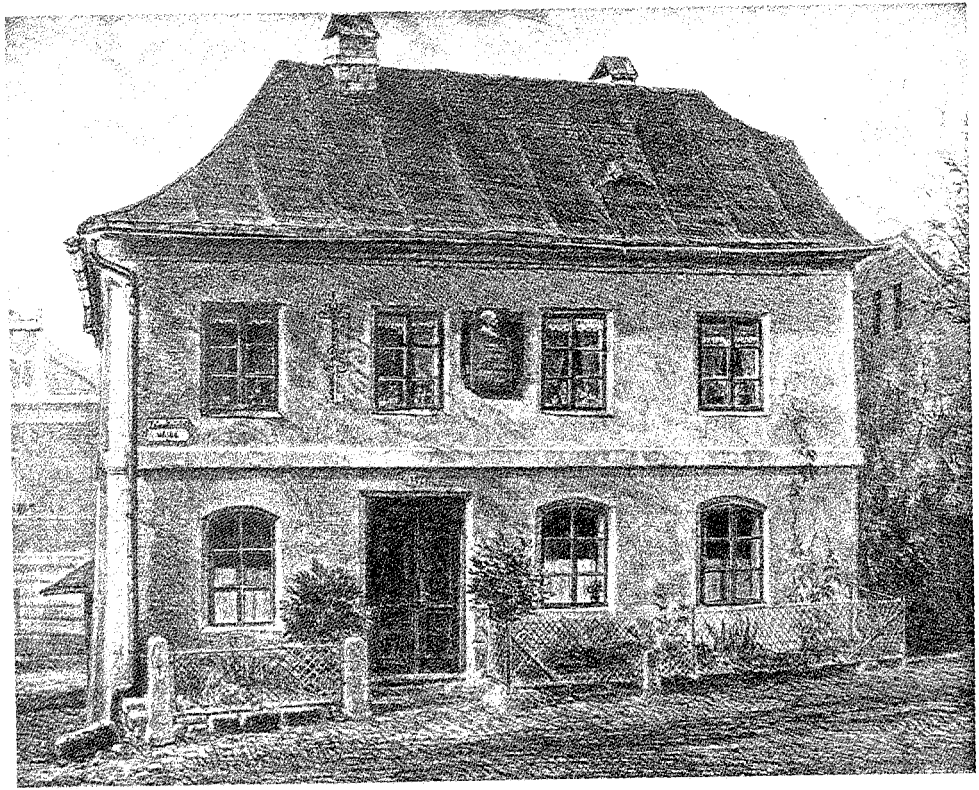


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OF THE COMPLETE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKS OF

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## Civilization and its Discontents
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# CONTENTS

## VOLUME TWENTY-ONE

## THE FUTURE OF AN ILLUSION (1927)


Editor's Note *page* 3
The Future of an Illusion 5


## CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS (1930 [1929])


Editor's Introduction 59
Civilization and its Discontents 64

FETISHISM (1927)
Editor's Note 149
Fetishism 152

HUMOUR (1927) 159

A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE (1928 [1927]) 167

DOSTOEVSKY AND PARRICIDE (1928 [1927])
Editor's Note 175
Dostoevsky and Parricide 177
Appendix: A Letter from Freud to Theodor Reik 195

SOME DREAMS OF DESCARTES': A LETTER TO MAXIME LEROY (1929)
Editor's Note 199
Some Dreams of Descartes' 203

THE GOETHE PRIZE (1930)
Letter to Alfons Paquet 207
Address Delivered in the Goethe House at Frankfurt 208
Appendix: List of Writings by Freud Dealing Mainly or Largely with Art, Literature or the Theory of Aesthetics 213

LIBIDINAL TYPES (1931) *page* 215

FEMALE SEXUALITY (1931)
Editor's Note 223
Female Sexuality 225

## SHORTER WRITINGS
## (1926–1931)

Dr. Reik and the Problem of Quackery: A Letter to the *Neue Freie Presse* 247
Dr. Ernest Jones (on his 50th Birthday) 249
The Expert Opinion in the Halsmann Case 251
Introduction to the Special Psychopathology Number of *The Medical Review of Reviews* 254
Introduction to Edoardo Weiss's *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* 256
Preface to *Ten Years of the Berlin Psycho-Analytic Institute* 257
Preface to Hermann Nunberg's *General Theory of the Neuroses on a Psycho-Analytic Basis* 258
Letter to the Burgomaster of Příbor 259

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND AUTHOR INDEX 261
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS 273
GENERAL INDEX 275

FRONTISPIECE: Freud's Birthplace in Příbor (Freiberg)

# THE FUTURE OF AN ILLUSION
(1927)

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## DIE ZUKUNFT EINER ILLUSION

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1927 Leipzig, Vienna and Zurich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag. Pp. 91.

1928 2nd ed. Same publishers. (Unchanged.) Pp. 91.

1928 *G.S.*, **11**, 411–66.

1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 325–380.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

*The Future of an Illusion*

1928 London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis. Pp. 98. (Tr. W. D. Robson-Scott.)

The present translation is based on that published in 1928.

This work was begun in the spring of 1927, it was finished by September and published in November of the same year.

In the 'Postscript' which Freud added in 1935 to his *Autobiographical Study* he remarked on 'a significant change' that had come about in his writings during the previous decade. 'My interest', he explained, 'after making a long *détour* through the natural sciences, medicine and psychotherapy, returned to the cultural problems which had fascinated me long before, when I was a youth scarcely old enough for thinking' (*Standard Ed.*, **20**, 72). He had, of course, touched several times on those problems in the intervening years—especially in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13);[1] but it was with *The Future of an Illusion* that he entered on the series of studies which were to be his major concern for the remainder of his life. Of these the most important were *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), which is the direct successor to the present work, the discussion of philosophies of life which forms the last of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*), *Why War?* (1933*b*), Freud's open letter to Einstein, and

[1] His earliest published approach to the problem of religion was in the paper on 'Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices' (1907*b*).

finally *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*), which he worked at from 1934 onwards.

In view of Freud's sweeping pronouncement on p. 6 ('I scorn to distinguish between culture and civilization') and of a similar remark towards the end of '*Why War?*', it seems unnecessary to embark on the tiresome problem of the proper translation of the German word '*Kultur*'. We have usually, but not invariably, chosen 'civilization' for the noun and 'cultural' for the adjective.

# THE FUTURE OF AN ILLUSION

## I

WHEN one has lived for quite a long time in a particular civilization[1] and has often tried to discover what its origins were and along what path it has developed, one sometimes also feels tempted to take a glance in the other direction and to ask what further fate lies before it and what transformations it is destined to undergo. But one soon finds that the value of such an enquiry is diminished from the outset by several factors. Above all, because there are only a few people who can survey human activity in its full compass. Most people have been obliged to restrict themselves to a single, or a few, fields of it. But the less a man knows about the past and the present the more insecure must prove to be his judgement of the future. And there is the further difficulty that precisely in a judgement of this kind the subjective expectations of the individual play a part which it is difficult to assess; and these turn out to be dependent on purely personal factors in his own experience, on the greater or lesser optimism of his attitude to life, as it has been dictated for him by his temperament or by his success or failure. Finally, the curious fact makes itself felt that in general people experience their present naïvely, as it were, without being able to form an estimate of its contents; they have first to put themselves at a distance from it—the present, that is to say, must have become the past—before it can yield points of vantage from which to judge the future.

Thus anyone who gives way to the temptation to deliver an opinion on the probable future of our civilization will do well to remind himself of the difficulties I have just pointed out, as well as of the uncertainty that attaches quite generally to any prophecy. It follows from this, so far as I am concerned, that I shall make a hasty retreat before a task that is too great, and shall promptly seek out the small tract of territory which has claimed my attention hitherto, as soon as I have determined its position in the general scheme of things.

Human civilization, by which I mean all those respects in

[1] [See Editor's Note, p. 4.]

which human life has raised itself above its animal status and differs from the life of beasts—and I scorn to distinguish between culture and civilization—, presents, as we know, two aspects to the observer. It includes on the one hand all the knowledge and capacity that men have acquired in order to control the forces of nature and extract its wealth for the satisfaction of human needs, and, on the other hand, all the regulations necessary in order to adjust the relations of men to one another and especially the distribution of the available wealth. The two trends of civilization are not independent of each other: firstly, because the mutual relations of men are profoundly influenced by the amount of instinctual satisfaction which the existing wealth makes possible; secondly, because an individual man can himself come to function as wealth in relation to another one, in so far as the other person makes use of his capacity for work, or chooses him as a sexual object; and thirdly, moreover, because every individual is virtually an enemy of civilization, though civilization is supposed to be an object of universal human interest.[1] It is remarkable that, little as men are able to exist in isolation, they should nevertheless feel as a heavy burden the sacrifices which civilization expects of them in order to make a communal life possible. Thus civilization has to be defended against the individual, and its regulations, institutions and commands are directed to that task. They aim not only at effecting a certain distribution of wealth but at maintaining that distribution; indeed, they have to protect everything that contributes to the conquest of nature and the production of wealth against men's hostile impulses. Human creations are easily destroyed, and science and technology, which have built them up, can also be used for their annihilation.

One thus gets an impression that civilization is something which was imposed on a resisting majority by a minority which understood how to obtain possession of the means to power and coercion. It is, of course, natural to assume that these difficulties are not inherent in the nature of civilization itself but are determined by the imperfections of the cultural forms which have so far been developed. And in fact it is not difficult to

[1] [The hostility of human individuals to civilization plays a large part in the earlier chapters of this work. Freud returned to the subject and discussed it still more fully two years later in his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*).]

indicate those defects. While mankind has made continual advances in its control over nature and may expect to make still greater ones, it is not possible to establish with certainty that a similar advance has been made in the management of human affairs; and probably at all periods, just as now once again, many people have asked themselves whether what little civilization has thus acquired is indeed worth defending at all. One would think that a re-ordering of human relations should be possible, which would remove the sources of dissatisfaction with civilization by renouncing coercion and the suppression of the instincts, so that, undisturbed by internal discord, men might devote themselves to the acquisition of wealth and its enjoyment. That would be the golden age, but it is questionable if such a state of affairs can be realized. It seems rather that every civilization must be built up on coercion and renunciation of instinct; it does not even seem certain that if coercion were to cease the majority of human beings would be prepared to undertake to perform the work necessary for acquiring new wealth. One has, I think, to reckon with the fact that there are present in all men destructive, and therefore anti-social and anti-cultural, trends and that in a great number of people these are strong enough to determine their behaviour in human society.

This psychological fact has a decisive importance for our judgement of human civilization. Whereas we might at first think that its essence lies in controlling nature for the purpose of acquiring wealth and that the dangers which threaten it could be eliminated through a suitable distribution of that wealth among men, it now seems that the emphasis has moved over from the material to the mental. The decisive question is whether and to what extent it is possible to lessen the burden of the instinctual sacrifices imposed on men, to reconcile men to those which must necessarily remain and to provide a compensation for them. It is just as impossible to do without control of the mass[1] by a minority as it is to dispense with coercion in the work of civilization. For masses are lazy and unintelligent; they have no love for instinctual renunciation, and they are not to be convinced by argument of its inevitability; and the individuals composing them support one another in giving free

[1] ['*Masse*.' The German word has a very wide meaning. It is translated 'group' for special reasons in Freud's *Group Psychology* (1921*c*). See *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 69*n*. Here 'mass' seems more appropriate.]

rein to their indiscipline. It is only through the influence of individuals who can set an example and whom masses recognize as their leaders that they can be induced to perform the work and undergo the renunciations on which the existence of civilization depends. All is well if these leaders are persons who possess superior insight into the necessities of life and who have risen to the height of mastering their own instinctual wishes. But there is a danger that in order not to lose their influence they may give way to the mass more than it gives way to them, and it therefore seems necessary that they shall be independent of the mass by having means to power at their disposal. To put it briefly, there are two widespread human characteristics which are responsible for the fact that the regulations of civilization can only be maintained by a certain degree of coercion—namely, that men are not spontaneously fond of work and that arguments are of no avail against their passions.

I know the objections which will be raised against these assertions. It will be said that the characteristic of human masses depicted here, which is supposed to prove that coercion cannot be dispensed with in the work of civilization, is itself only the result of defects in the cultural regulations, owing to which men have become embittered, revengeful and inaccessible. New generations, who have been brought up in kindness and taught to have a high opinion of reason, and who have experienced the benefits of civilization at an early age, will have a different attitude to it. They will feel it as a possession of their very own and will be ready for its sake to make the sacrifices as regards work and instinctual satisfaction that are necessary for its preservation. They will be able to do without coercion and will differ little from their leaders. If no culture has so far produced human masses of such a quality, it is because no culture has yet devised regulations which will influence men in this way, and in particular from childhood onwards.

It may be doubted whether it is possible at all, or at any rate as yet, at the present stage of our control over nature, to set up cultural regulations of this kind. It may be asked where the number of superior, unswerving and disinterested leaders are to come from who are to act as educators of the future generations, and it may be alarming to think of the enormous amount of coercion that will inevitably be required before these intentions can be carried out. The grandeur of the plan and its importance

for the future of human civilization cannot be disputed. It is securely based on the psychological discovery that man is equipped with the most varied instinctual dispositions, whose ultimate course is determined by the experiences of early childhood. But for the same reason the limitations of man's capacity for education set bounds to the effectiveness of such a transformation in his culture. One may question whether, and in what degree, it would be possible for a different cultural environment to do away with the two characteristics of human masses which make the guidance of human affairs so difficult. The experiment has not yet been made. Probably a certain percentage of mankind (owing to a pathological disposition or an excess of instinctual strength) will always remain asocial; but if it were feasible merely to reduce the majority that is hostile towards civilization to-day into a minority, a great deal would have been accomplished—perhaps all that *can* be accomplished.

I should not like to give the impression that I have strayed a long way from the line laid down for my enquiry [p. 5]. Let me therefore give an express assurance that I have not the least intention of making judgements on the great experiment in civilization that is now in progress in the vast country that stretches between Europe and Asia.[1] I have neither the special knowledge nor the capacity to decide on its practicability, to test the expediency of the methods employed or to measure the width of the inevitable gap between intention and execution. What is in preparation there is unfinished and therefore eludes an investigation for which our own long-consolidated civilization affords us material.

[1] [See, however, some remarks in Chapter V of *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), p. 112 ff. below, and at two points in *Why War?* (1933*b*) and a long discussion in the last of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*).]

## II

We have slipped unawares out of the economic field into the field of psychology. At first we were tempted to look for the assets of civilization in the available wealth and in the regulations for its distribution. But with the recognition that every civilization rests on a compulsion to work and a renunciation of instinct and therefore inevitably provokes opposition from those affected by these demands, it has become clear that civilization cannot consist principally or solely in wealth itself and the means of acquiring it and the arrangements for its distribution; for these things are threatened by the rebelliousness and destructive mania of the participants in civilization. Alongside of wealth we now come upon the means by which civilization can be defended—measures of coercion and other measures that are intended to reconcile men to it and to recompense them for their sacrifices. These latter may be described as the mental assets of civilization.

For the sake of a uniform terminology we will describe the fact that an instinct cannot be satisfied as a 'frustration', the regulation by which this frustration is established as a 'prohibition' and the condition which is produced by the prohibition as a 'privation'. The first step is to distinguish between privations which affect everyone and privations which do not affect everyone but only groups, classes or even single individuals. The former are the earliest; with the prohibitions that established them, civilization—who knows how many thousands of years ago?—began to detach man from his primordial animal condition. We have found to our surprise that these privations are still operative and still form the kernel of hostility to civilization. The instinctual wishes that suffer under them are born afresh with every child; there is a class of people, the neurotics, who already react to these frustrations with asocial behaviour. Among these instinctual wishes are those of incest, cannibalism and lust for killing. It sounds strange to place alongside one another wishes which everyone seems united in repudiating and others about which there is so much lively dispute in our civilization as to whether they shall be permitted or frustrated; but psychologically it is justifiable to do so. Nor is the attitude

of civilization to these oldest instinctual wishes by any means uniform. Cannibalism alone seems to be universally proscribed and—to the non-psycho-analytic view—to have been completely surmounted. The strength of the incestuous wishes can still be detected behind the prohibition against them; and under certain conditions killing is still practised, and indeed commanded, by our civilization. It is possible that cultural developments lie ahead of us in which the satisfaction of yet other wishes, which are entirely permissible to-day, will appear just as unacceptable as cannibalism does now.

These earliest instinctual renunciations already involve a psychological factor which remains important for all further instinctual renunciations as well. It is not true that the human mind has undergone no development since the earliest times and that, in contrast to the advances of science and technology, it is the same to-day as it was at the beginning of history. We can point out one of these mental advances at once. It is in keeping with the course of human development that external coercion gradually becomes internalized; for a special mental agency, man's super-ego, takes it over and includes it among its commandments.[1] Every child presents this process of transformation to us; only by that means does it become a moral and social being. Such a strengthening of the super-ego is a most precious cultural asset in the psychological field. Those in whom it has taken place are turned from being opponents of civilization into being its vehicles. The greater their number is in a cultural unit the more secure is its culture and the more it can dispense with external measures of coercion. Now the degree of this internalization differs greatly between the various instinctual prohibitions. As regards the earliest cultural demands, which I have mentioned, the internalization seems to have been very extensively achieved, if we leave out of account the unwelcome exception of the neurotics. But the case is altered when we turn to the other instinctual claims. Here we observe with surprise and concern that a majority of people obey the cultural prohibitions on these points only under the pressure of external coercion—that is, only where that coercion can make itself effective and so long as it is to be feared. This is also true of what are known as the *moral* demands of civilization, which

[1] [See Chapter III of *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 28 ff.]

likewise apply to everyone. Most of one's experiences of man's moral untrustworthiness fall into this category. There are countless civilized people who would shrink from murder or incest but who do not deny themselves the satisfaction of their avarice, their aggressive urges or their sexual lusts, and who do not hesitate to injure other people by lies, fraud and calumny, so long as they can remain unpunished for it; and this, no doubt, has always been so through many ages of civilization.

If we turn to those restrictions that apply only to certain classes of society, we meet with a state of things which is flagrant and which has always been recognized. It is to be expected that these underprivileged classes will envy the favoured ones their privileges and will do all they can to free themselves from their own surplus of privation. Where this is not possible, a permanent measure of discontent will persist within the culture concerned and this can lead to dangerous revolts. If, however, a culture has not got beyond a point at which the satisfaction of one portion of its participants depends upon the suppression of another, and perhaps larger, portion—and this is the case in all present-day cultures—it is understandable that the suppressed people should develop an intense hostility towards a culture whose existence they make possible by their work, but in whose wealth they have too small a share. In such conditions an internalization of the cultural prohibitions among the suppressed people is not to be expected. On the contrary, they are not prepared to acknowledge the prohibitions, they are intent on destroying the culture itself, and possibly even on doing away with the postulates on which it is based. The hostility of these classes to civilization is so obvious that it has caused the more latent hostility of the social strata that are better provided for to be overlooked. It goes without saying that a civilization which leaves so large a number of its participants unsatisfied and drives them into revolt neither has nor deserves the prospect of a lasting existence.

The extent to which a civilization's precepts have been internalized—to express it popularly and unpsychologically: the moral level of its participants—is not the only form of mental wealth that comes into consideration in estimating a civilization's value. There are in addition its assets in the shape of ideals and artistic creations—that is, the satisfactions that can be derived from those sources.

People will be only too readily inclined to include among the psychical assets of a culture its ideals—its estimates of what achievements are the highest and the most to be striven after. It will seem at first as though these ideals would determine the achievements of the cultural unit; but the actual course of events would appear to be that the ideals are based on the first achievements which have been made possible by a combination of the culture's internal gifts and external circumstances, and that these first achievements are then held on to by the ideal as something to be carried further. The satisfaction which the ideal offers to the participants in the culture is thus of a narcissistic nature; it rests on their pride in what has already been successfully achieved. To make this satisfaction complete calls for a comparison with other cultures which have aimed at different achievements and have developed different ideals. On the strength of these differences every culture claims the right to look down on the rest. In this way cultural ideals become a source of discord and enmity between different cultural units, as can be seen most clearly in the case of nations.

The narcissistic satisfaction provided by the cultural ideal is also among the forces which are successful in combating the hostility to culture within the cultural unit. This satisfaction can be shared in not only by the favoured classes, which enjoy the benefits of the culture, but also by the suppressed ones, since the right to despise the people outside it compensates them for the wrongs they suffer within their own unit. No doubt one is a wretched plebeian, harassed by debts and military service; but, to make up for it, one is a Roman citizen, one has one's share in the task of ruling other nations and dictating their laws. This identification of the suppressed classes with the class who rules and exploits them is, however, only part of a larger whole. For, on the other hand, the suppressed classes can be emotionally attached to their masters; in spite of their hostility to them they may see in them their ideals; unless such relations of a fundamentally satisfying kind subsisted, it would be impossible to understand how a number of civilizations have survived so long in spite of the justifiable hostility of large human masses.

A different kind of satisfaction is afforded by art to the participants in a cultural unit, though as a rule it remains inaccessible to the masses, who are engaged in exhausting work and have not enjoyed any personal education. As we discovered

long since,[1] art offers substitutive satisfactions for the oldest and still most deeply felt cultural renunciations, and for that reason it serves as nothing else does to reconcile a man to the sacrifices he has made on behalf of civilization. On the other hand, the creations of art heighten his feelings of identification, of which every cultural unit stands in so much need, by providing an occasion for sharing highly valued emotional experiences. And when those creations picture the achievements of his particular culture and bring to his mind its ideals in an impressive manner, they also minister to his narcissistic satisfaction.

No mention has yet been made of what is perhaps the most important item in the psychical inventory of a civilization. This consists in its religious ideas in the widest sense—in other words (which will be justified later) in its illusions.

[1] [Cf., for instance, 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming' (1908*e*).

## III

In what does the peculiar value of religious ideas lie?

We have spoken of the hostility to civilization which is produced by the pressure that civilization exercises, the renunciations of instinct which it demands. If one imagines its prohibitions lifted—if, then, one may take any woman one pleases as a sexual object, if one may without hesitation kill one's rival for her love or anyone else who stands in one's way, if, too, one can carry off any of the other man's belongings without asking leave—how splendid, what a string of satisfactions one's life would be! True, one soon comes across the first difficulty: everyone else has exactly the same wishes as I have and will treat me with no more consideration than I treat him. And so in reality only one person could be made unrestrictedly happy by such a removal of the restrictions of civilization, and he would be a tyrant, a dictator, who had seized all the means to power. And even he would have every reason to wish that the others would observe at least one cultural commandment: 'thou shalt not kill'.

But how ungrateful, how short-sighted after all, to strive for the abolition of civilization! What would then remain would be a state of nature, and that would be far harder to bear. It is true that nature would not demand any restrictions of instinct from us, she would let us do as we liked; but she has her own particularly effective method of restricting us. She destroys us—coldly, cruelly, relentlessly, as it seems to us, and possibly through the very things that occasioned our satisfaction. It was precisely because of these dangers with which nature threatens us that we came together and created civilization, which is also, among other things, intended to make our communal life possible. For the principal task of civilization, its actual *raison d'être*, is to defend us against nature.

We all know that in many ways civilization does this fairly well already, and clearly as time goes on it will do it much better. But no one is under the illusion that nature has already been vanquished; and few dare hope that she will ever be entirely subjected to man. There are the elements, which seem to mock at all human control: the earth, which quakes and is

torn apart and buries all human life and its works; water, which deluges and drowns everything in a turmoil; storms, which blow everything before them; there are diseases, which we have only recently recognized as attacks by other organisms; and finally there is the painful riddle of death, against which no medicine has yet been found, nor probably will be. With these forces nature rises up against us, majestic, cruel and inexorable; she brings to our mind once more our weakness and helplessness, which we thought to escape through the work of civilization. One of the few gratifying and exalting impressions which mankind can offer is when, in the face of an elemental catastrophe, it forgets the discordancies of its civilization and all its internal difficulties and animosities, and recalls the great common task of preserving itself against the superior power of nature.

For the individual, too, life is hard to bear, just as it is for mankind in general. The civilization in which he participates imposes some amount of privation on him, and other men bring him a measure of suffering, either in spite of the precepts of his civilization or because of its imperfections. To this are added the injuries which untamed nature—he calls it Fate—inflicts on him. One might suppose that this condition of things would result in a permanent state of anxious expectation in him and a severe injury to his natural narcissism. We know already how the individual reacts to the injuries which civilization and other men inflict on him: he develops a corresponding degree of resistance to the regulations of civilization and of hostility to it. But how does he defend himself against the superior powers of nature, of Fate, which threaten him as they threaten all the rest?

Civilization relieves him of this task; it performs it in the same way for all alike; and it is noteworthy that in this almost all civilizations act alike. Civilization does not call a halt in the task of defending man against nature, it merely pursues it by other means. The task is a manifold one. Man's self-regard, seriously menaced, calls for consolation; life and the universe must be robbed of their terrors; moreover his curiosity, moved, it is true, by the strongest practical interest, demands an answer.

A great deal is already gained with the first step: the humanization of nature. Impersonal forces and destinies cannot be approached; they remain eternally remote. But if the elements have passions that rage as they do in our own souls, if death

itself is not something spontaneous but the violent act of an evil Will, if everywhere in nature there are Beings around us of a kind that we know in our own society, then we can breathe freely, can feel at home in the uncanny and can deal by psychical means with our senseless anxiety. We are still defenceless, perhaps, but we are no longer helplessly paralysed; we can at least react. Perhaps, indeed, we are not even defenceless. We can apply the same methods against these violent supermen outside that we employ in our own society; we can try to adjure them, to appease them, to bribe them, and, by so influencing them, we may rob them of a part of their power. A replacement like this of natural science by psychology not only provides immediate relief, but also points the way to a further mastering of the situation.

For this situation is nothing new. It has an infantile prototype, of which it is in fact only the continuation. For once before one has found oneself in a similar state of helplessness: as a small child, in relation to one's parents. One had reason to fear them, and especially one's father; and yet one was sure of his protection against the dangers one knew. Thus it was natural to assimilate the two situations. Here, too, wishing played its part, as it does in dream-life. The sleeper may be seized with a presentiment of death, which threatens to place him in the grave. But the dream-work knows how to select a condition that will turn even that dreaded event into a wish-fulfilment: the dreamer sees himself in an ancient Etruscan grave which he has climbed down into, happy to find his archaeological interests satisfied.[1] In the same way, a man makes the forces of nature not simply into persons with whom he can associate as he would with his equals—that would not do justice to the overpowering impression which those forces make on him—but he gives them the character of a father. He turns them into gods, following in this, as I have tried to show,[2] not only an infantile prototype but a phylogenetic one.

In the course of time the first observations were made of regularity and conformity to law in natural phenomena, and with this the forces of nature lost their human traits. But man's

[1] [This was an actual dream of Freud's, reported in Chapter VI (G) of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **5**, 454–5.]

[2] [See Section 6 of the fourth essay in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13), *Standard Ed.*, **13**, 146 ff.]

helplessness remains and along with it his longing for his father, and the gods. The gods retain their threefold task: they must exorcize the terrors of nature, they must reconcile men to the cruelty of Fate, particularly as it is shown in death, and they must compensate them for the sufferings and privations which a civilized life in common has imposed on them.

But within these functions there is a gradual displacement of accent. It was observed that the phenomena of nature developed automatically according to internal necessities. Without doubt the gods were the lords of nature; they had arranged it to be as it was and now they could leave it to itself. Only occasionally, in what are known as miracles, did they intervene in its course, as though to make it plain that they had relinquished nothing of their original sphere of power. As regards the apportioning of destinies, an unpleasant suspicion persisted that the perplexity and helplessness of the human race could not be remedied. It was here that the gods were most apt to fail. If they themselves created Fate, then their counsels must be deemed inscrutable. The notion dawned on the most gifted people of antiquity that Moira [Fate] stood above the gods and that the gods themselves had their own destinies. And the more autonomous nature became and the more the gods withdrew from it, the more earnestly were all expectations directed to the third function of the gods—the more did morality become their true domain. It now became the task of the gods to even out the defects and evils of civilization, to attend to the sufferings which men inflict on one another in their life together and to watch over the fulfilment of the precepts of civilization, which men obey so imperfectly. Those precepts themselves were credited with a divine origin; they were elevated beyond human society and were extended to nature and the universe.

And thus a store of ideas is created, born from man's need to make his helplessness tolerable and built up from the material of memories of the helplessness of his own childhood and the childhood of the human race. It can clearly be seen that the possession of these ideas protects him in two directions—against the dangers of nature and Fate, and against the injuries that threaten him from human society itself. Here is the gist of the matter. Life in this world serves a higher purpose; no doubt it is not easy to guess what that purpose is, but it certainly signifies a perfecting of man's nature. It is probably the spiritual part of

man, the soul, which in the course of time has so slowly and unwillingly detached itself from the body, that is the object of this elevation and exaltation. Everything that happens in this world is an expression of the intentions of an intelligence superior to us, which in the end, though its ways and byways are difficult to follow, orders everything for the best—that is, to make it enjoyable for us. Over each one of us there watches a benevolent Providence which is only seemingly stern and which will not suffer us to become a plaything of the overmighty and pitiless forces of nature. Death itself is not extinction, is not a return to inorganic lifelessness, but the beginning of a new kind of existence which lies on the path of development to something higher. And, looking in the other direction, this view announces that the same moral laws which our civilizations have set up govern the whole universe as well, except that they are maintained by a supreme court of justice with incomparably more power and consistency. In the end all good is rewarded and all evil punished, if not actually in this form of life then in the later existences that begin after death. In this way all the terrors, the sufferings and the hardships of life are destined to be obliterated. Life after death, which continues life on earth just as the invisible part of the spectrum joins on to the visible part, brings us all the perfection that we may perhaps have missed here. And the superior wisdom which directs this course of things, the infinite goodness that expresses itself in it, the justice that achieves its aim in it—these are the attributes of the divine beings who also created us and the world as a whole, or rather, of the one divine being into which, in our civilization, all the gods of antiquity have been condensed. The people which first succeeded in thus concentrating the divine attributes was not a little proud of the advance. It had laid open to view the father who had all along been hidden behind every divine figure as its nucleus. Fundamentally this was a return to the historical beginnings of the idea of God. Now that God was a single person, man's relations to him could recover the intimacy and intensity of the child's relation to his father. But if one had done so much for one's father, one wanted to have a reward, or at least to be his only beloved child, his Chosen People. Very much later, pious America laid claim to being 'God's own Country'; and, as regards one of the shapes in which men worship the deity, the claim is undoubtedly valid.

The religious ideas that have been summarized above have of course passed through a long process of development and have been adhered to in various phases by various civilizations. I have singled out one such phase, which roughly corresponds to the final form taken by our present-day white Christian civilization. It is easy to see that not all the parts of this picture tally equally well with one another, that not all the questions that press for an answer receive one, and that it is difficult to dismiss the contradiction of daily experience. Nevertheless, such as they are, those ideas—ideas which are religious in the widest sense—are prized as the most precious possession of civilization, as the most precious thing it has to offer its participants. It is far more highly prized than all the devices for winning treasures from the earth or providing men with sustenance or preventing their illnesses, and so forth. People feel that life would not be tolerable if they did not attach to these ideas the value that is claimed for them. And now the question arises: what are these ideas in the light of psychology? Whence do they derive the esteem in which they are held? And, to take a further timid step, what is their real worth?

## IV

An enquiry which proceeds like a monologue, without interruption, is not altogether free from danger. One is too easily tempted into pushing aside thoughts which threaten to break into it, and in exchange one is left with a feeling of uncertainty which in the end one tries to keep down by over-decisiveness. I shall therefore imagine that I have an opponent who follows my arguments with mistrust, and here and there I shall allow him to interject some remarks.[1]

I hear him say: 'You have repeatedly used the expressions "civilization creates these religious ideas", "civilization places them at the disposal of its participants". There is something about this that sounds strange to me. I cannot myself say why, but it does not sound so natural as it does to say that civilization has made rules about distributing the products of labour or about rights concerning women and children.'

I think, all the same, that I am justified in expressing myself in this way. I have tried to show that religious ideas have arisen from the same need as have all the other achievements of civilization: from the necessity of defending oneself against the crushingly superior force of nature. To this a second motive was added—the urge to rectify the shortcomings of civilization which made themselves painfully felt. Moreover, it is especially apposite to say that civilization gives the individual these ideas, for he finds them there already; they are presented to him ready-made, and he would not be able to discover them for himself. What he is entering into is the heritage of many generations, and he takes it over as he does the multiplication table, geometry, and similar things. There is indeed a difference in this, but that difference lies elsewhere and I cannot examine it yet. The feeling of strangeness that you mention may be partly due to the fact that this body of religious ideas is usually put forward as a divine revelation. But this presentation of it is itself a part of the religious system, and it entirely ignores the

[1] [Freud had adopted the same method of presentation in his recent discussion of lay analysis (1926*e*) and also, though in somewhat different circumstances, a quarter of a century earlier in his paper on 'Screen Memories' (1899*a*).]

known historical development of these ideas and their differences in different epochs and civilizations.

'Here is another point, which seems to me to be more important. You argue that the humanization of nature is derived from the need to put an end to man's perplexity and helplessness in the face of its dreaded forces, to get into a relation with them and finally to influence them. But a motive of this kind seems superfluous. Primitive man has no choice, he has no other way of thinking. It is natural to him, something innate, as it were, to project his existence outwards into the world and to regard every event which he observes as the manifestation of beings who at bottom are like himself. It is his only method of comprehension. And it is by no means self-evident, on the contrary it is a remarkable coincidence, if by thus indulging his natural disposition he succeeds in satisfying one of his greatest needs.'

I do not find that so striking. Do you suppose that human thought has no practical motives, that it is simply the expression of a disinterested curiosity? That is surely very improbable. I believe rather that when man personifies the forces of nature he is again following an infantile model. He has learnt from the persons in his earliest environment that the way to influence them is to establish a relation with them; and so, later on, with the same end in view, he treats everything else that he comes across in the same way as he treated those persons. Thus I do not contradict your descriptive observation; it is in fact natural to man to personify everything that he wants to understand in order later to control it (psychical mastering as a preparation for physical mastering); but I provide in addition a motive and a genesis for this peculiarity of human thinking.

'And now here is yet a third point. You have dealt with the origin of religion once before, in your book *Totem and Taboo* [1912–13]. But there it appeared in a different light. Everything was the son–father relationship. God was the exalted father, and the longing for the father was the root of the need for religion. Since then, it seems, you have discovered the factor of human weakness and helplessness, to which indeed the chief role in the formation of religion is generally assigned, and now you transpose everything that was once the father complex into terms of helplessness. May I ask you to explain this transformation?'

With pleasure. I was only waiting for this invitation. But is

it really a transformation? In *Totem and Taboo* it was not my purpose to explain the origin of religions but only of totemism. Can you, from any of the views known to you, explain the fact that the first shape in which the protecting deity revealed itself to men should have been that of an animal, that there was a prohibition against killing and eating this animal and that nevertheless the solemn custom was to kill and eat it communally once a year? This is precisely what happens in totemism. And it is hardly to the purpose to argue about whether totemism ought to be called a religion. It has intimate connections with the later god-religions. The totem animals become the sacred animals of the gods; and the earliest, but most fundamental moral restrictions—the prohibitions against murder and incest —originate in totemism. Whether or not you accept the conclusions of *Totem and Taboo*, I hope you will admit that a number of very remarkable, disconnected facts are brought together in it into a consistent whole.

The question of why in the long run the animal god did not suffice, and was replaced by a human one, was hardly touched on in *Totem and Taboo*, and other problems concerning the formation of religion were not mentioned in the book at all. Do you regard a limitation of that kind as the same thing as a denial? My work is a good example of the strict isolation of the particular contribution which psycho-analytic discussion can make to the solution of the problem of religion. If I am now trying to add the other, less deeply concealed part, you should not accuse me of contradicting myself, just as before you accused me of being one-sided. It is, of course, my duty to point out the connecting links between what I said earlier and what I put forward now, between the deeper and the manifest motives, between the father-complex and man's helplessness and need for protection.

These connections are not hard to find. They consist in the relation of the child's helplessness to the helplessness of the adult which continues it. So that, as was to be expected, the motives for the formation of religion which psycho-analysis revealed now turn out to be the same as the infantile contribution to the *manifest* motives. Let us transport ourselves into the mental life of a child. You remember the choice of object according to the anaclitic [attachment] type, which psycho-analysis talks of?[1]

[1] [See Freud's paper on narcissism (1914*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 87.]

The libido there follows the paths of narcissistic needs and attaches itself to the objects which ensure the satisfaction of those needs. In this way the mother, who satisfies the child's hunger, becomes its first love-object and certainly also its first protection against all the undefined dangers which threaten it in the external world—its first protection against anxiety, we may say.

In this function [of protection] the mother is soon replaced by the stronger father, who retains that position for the rest of childhood. But the child's attitude to its father is coloured by a peculiar ambivalence. The father himself constitutes a danger for the child, perhaps because of its earlier relation to its mother. Thus it fears him no less than it longs for him and admires him. The indications of this ambivalence in the attitude to the father are deeply imprinted in every religion, as was shown in *Totem and Taboo*. When the growing individual finds that he is destined to remain a child for ever, that he can never do without protection against strange superior powers, he lends those powers the features belonging to the figure of his father; he creates for himself the gods whom he dreads, whom he seeks to propitiate, and whom he nevertheless entrusts with his own protection. Thus his longing for a father is a motive identical with his need for protection against the consequences of his human weakness. The defence against childish helplessness is what lends its characteristic features to the adult's reaction to the helplessness which *he* has to acknowledge—a reaction which is precisely the formation of religion. But it is not my intention to enquire any further into the development of the idea of God; what we are concerned with here is the finished body of religious ideas as it is transmitted by civilization to the individual.

## V

LET us now take up the thread of our enquiry.[1] What, then, is the psychological significance of religious ideas and under what heading are we to classify them? The question is not at all easy to answer immediately. After rejecting a number of formulations, we will take our stand on the following one. Religious ideas are teachings and assertions about facts and conditions of external (or internal) reality which tell one something one has not discovered for oneself and which lay claim to one's belief. Since they give us information about what is most important and interesting to us in life, they are particularly highly prized. Anyone who knows nothing of them is very ignorant; and anyone who has added them to his knowledge may consider himself much the richer.

There are, of course, many such teachings about the most various things in the world. Every school lesson is full of them. Let us take geography. We are told that the town of Constance lies on the Bodensee.[2] A student song adds: 'if you don't believe it, go and see.' I happen to have been there and can confirm the fact that that lovely town lies on the shore of a wide stretch of water which all those who live round it call the Bodensee; and I am now completely convinced of the correctness of this geographical assertion. In this connection I am reminded of another, very remarkable, experience. I was already a man of mature years when I stood for the first time on the hill of the Acropolis in Athens, between the temple ruins, looking out over the blue sea. A feeling of astonishment mingled with my joy. It seemed to say: 'So it really *is* true, just as we learnt at school!' How shallow and weak must have been the belief I then acquired in the real truth of what I heard, if I could be so astonished now! But I will not lay too much stress on the significance of this experience; for my astonishment could have had another explanation, which did not occur to me at the time and which is of a wholly subjective nature and has to do with the special character of the place.[3]

[1] [From the end of Chapter III, p. 20.]

[2] [The German name for what we call the Lake of Constance.]

[3] [This had happened in 1904, when Freud was almost fifty. He wrote

All teachings like these, then, demand belief in their contents, but not without producing grounds for their claim. They are put forward as the epitomized result of a longer process of thought based on observation and certainly also on inferences. If anyone wants to go through this process himself instead of accepting its result, they show him how to set about it. Moreover, we are always in addition given the source of the knowledge conveyed by them, where that source is not self-evident, as it is in the case of geographical assertions. For instance, the earth is shaped like a sphere; the proofs adduced for this are Foucault's pendulum experiment,[1] the behaviour of the horizon and the possibility of circumnavigating the earth. Since it is impracticable, as everyone concerned realizes, to send every schoolchild on a voyage round the world, we are satisfied with letting what is taught at school be taken on trust; but we know that the path to acquiring a personal conviction remains open.

Let us try to apply the same test to the teachings of religion. When we ask on what their claim to be believed is founded, we are met with three answers, which harmonize remarkably badly with one another. Firstly, these teachings deserve to be believed because they were already believed by our primal ancestors; secondly, we possess proofs which have been handed down to us from those same primaeval times; and thirdly, it is forbidden to raise the question of their authentication at all. In former days anything so presumptuous was visited with the severest penalties, and even to-day society looks askance at any attempt to raise the question again.

This third point is bound to rouse our strongest suspicions. After all, a prohibition like this can only be for one reason—that society is very well aware of the insecurity of the claim it makes on behalf of its religious doctines. Otherwise it would certainly be very ready to put the necessary data at the disposal of anyone who wanted to arrive at conviction. This being so, it is with a feeling of mistrust which it is hard to allay that we pass on to an examination of the other two grounds of proof. We ought to believe because our forefathers believed. But these

a full account of the episode in an open letter to Romain Rolland some ten years after the present work (1936*a*).]

[1] [J. B. L. Foucault (1819–68) demonstrated the diurnal motion of the earth by means of a pendulum in 1851.]

ancestors of ours were far more ignorant than we are. They believed in things we could not possibly accept to-day; and the possibility occurs to us that the doctrines of religion may belong to that class too. The proofs they have left us are set down in writings which themselves bear every mark of untrustworthiness. They are full of contradictions, revisions and falsifications, and where they speak of factual confirmations they are themselves unconfirmed. It does not help much to have it asserted that their wording, or even their content only, originates from divine revelation; for this assertion is itself one of the doctrines whose authenticity is under examination, and no proposition can be a proof of itself.

Thus we arrive at the singular conclusion that of all the information provided by our cultural assets it is precisely the elements which might be of the greatest importance to us and which have the task of solving the riddles of the universe and of reconciling us to the sufferings of life—it is precisely those elements that are the least well authenticated of any. We should not be able to bring ourselves to accept anything of so little concern to us as the fact that whales bear young instead of laying eggs, if it were not capable of better proof than this.

This state of affairs is in itself a very remarkable psychological problem. And let no one suppose that what I have said about the impossibility of proving the truth of religious doctrines contains anything new. It has been felt at all times—undoubtedly, too, by the ancestors who bequeathed us this legacy. Many of them probably nourished the same doubts as ours, but the pressure imposed on them was too strong for them to have dared to utter them. And since then countless people have been tormented by similar doubts, and have striven to suppress them, because they thought it was their duty to believe; many brilliant intellects have broken down over this conflict, and many characters have been impaired by the compromises with which they have tried to find a way out of it.

If all the evidence put forward for the authenticity of religious teachings originates in the past, it is natural to look round and see whether the present, about which it is easier to form judgements, may not also be able to furnish evidence of the sort. If by this means we could succeed in clearing even a single portion of the religious system from doubt, the whole of it would gain enormously in credibility. The proceedings of the spiritualists

meet us at this point; they are convinced of the survival of the individual soul and they seek to demonstrate to us beyond doubt the truth of this one religious doctrine. Unfortunately they cannot succeed in refuting the fact that the appearance and utterances of their spirits are merely the products of their own mental activity. They have called up the spirits of the greatest men and of the most eminent thinkers, but all the pronouncements and information which they have received from them have been so foolish and so wretchedly meaningless that one can find nothing credible in them but the capacity of the spirits to adapt themselves to the circle of people who have conjured them up.

I must now mention two attempts that have been made—both of which convey the impression of being desperate efforts—to evade the problem. One, of a violent nature, is ancient; the other is subtle and modern. The first is the '*Credo quia absurdum*' of the early Father of the Church.[1] It maintains that religious doctrines are outside the jurisdiction of reason—are above reason. Their truth must be felt inwardly, and they need not be comprehended. But this *Credo* is only of interest as a self-confession. As an authoritative statement it has no binding force. Am I to be obliged to believe *every* absurdity? And if not, why this one in particular? There is no appeal to a court above that of reason. If the truth of religious doctrines is dependent on an inner experience which bears witness to that truth, what is one to do about the many people who do not have this rare experience? One may require every man to use the gift of reason which he possesses, but one cannot erect, on the basis of a motive that exists only for a very few, an obligation that shall apply to everyone. If one man has gained an unshakable conviction of the true reality of religious doctrines from a state of ecstasy which has deeply moved him, of what significance is that to others?

The second attempt is the one made by the philosophy of 'As if'. This asserts that our thought-activity includes a great number of hypotheses whose groundlessness and even absurdity we fully realize. They are called 'fictions', but for a variety of practical reasons we have to behave 'as if' we believed in these fictions. This is the case with religious doctrines because of their incomparable importance for the maintenance of human

[1] ['I believe because it is absurd.' This is attributed to Tertullian.]

society.[1] This line of argument is not far removed from the '*Credo quia absurdum*'. But I think the demand made by the 'As if' argument is one that only a philosopher could put forward. A man whose thinking is not influenced by the artifices of philosophy will never be able to accept it; in such a man's view, the admission that something is absurd or contrary to reason leaves no more to be said. It cannot be expected of him that precisely in treating his most important interests he shall forgo the guarantees he requires for all his ordinary activities. I am reminded of one of my children who was distinguished at an early age by a peculiarly marked matter-of-factness. When the children were being told a fairy story and were listening to it with rapt attention, he would come up and ask: 'Is that a true story?' When he was told it was not, he would turn away with a look of disdain. We may expect that people will soon behave in the same way towards the fairy tales of religion, in spite of the advocacy of 'As if'.

But at present they still behave quite differently; and in past times religious ideas, in spite of their incontrovertible lack of authentication, have exercised the strongest possible influence on mankind. This is a fresh psychological problem. We must ask where the inner force of those doctrines lies and to what it is that they owe their efficacy, independent as it is of recognition by reason.

[1] I hope I am not doing him an injustice if I take the philosopher of 'As if' as the representative of a view which is not foreign to other thinkers: 'We include as fictions not merely indifferent theoretical operations but ideational constructs emanating from the noblest minds, to which the noblest part of mankind cling and of which they will not allow themselves to be deprived. Nor is it our object so to deprive them—for as *practical fictions* we leave them all intact; they perish only as *theoretical truths*.' (Hans Vaihinger, 1922, 68 [C. K. Ogden's translation, 1924, 48–9].)

## VI

I THINK we have prepared the way sufficiently for an answer to both these questions. It will be found if we turn our attention to the psychical origin of religious ideas. These, which are given out as teachings, are not precipitates of experience or end-results of thinking: they are illusions, fulfilments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind. The secret of their strength lies in the strength of those wishes. As we already know, the terrifying impression of helplessness in childhood aroused the need for protection—for protection through love—which was provided by the father; and the recognition that this helplessness lasts throughout life made it necessary to cling to the existence of a father, but this time a more powerful one. Thus the benevolent rule of a divine Providence allays our fear of the dangers of life; the establishment of a moral world-order ensures the fulfilment of the demands of justice, which have so often remained unfulfilled in human civilization; and the prolongation of earthly existence in a future life provides the local and temporal framework in which these wish-fulfilments shall take place. Answers to the riddles that tempt the curiosity of man, such as how the universe began or what the relation is between body and mind, are developed in conformity with the underlying assumptions of this system. It is an enormous relief to the individual psyche if the conflicts of its childhood arising from the father-complex—conflicts which it has never wholly overcome—are removed from it and brought to a solution which is universally accepted.

When I say that these things are all illusions, I must define the meaning of the word. An illusion is not the same thing as an error; nor is it necessarily an error. Aristotle's belief that vermin are developed out of dung (a belief to which ignorant people still cling) was an error; so was the belief of a former generation of doctors that *tabes dorsalis* is the result of sexual excess. It would be incorrect to call these errors illusions. On the other hand, it was an illusion of Columbus's that he had discovered a new sea-route to the Indies. The part played by his wish in this error is very clear. One may describe as an illusion the assertion made by certain nationalists that the Indo-

Germanic race is the only one capable of civilization; or the belief, which was only destroyed by psycho-analysis, that children are creatures without sexuality. What is characteristic of illusions is that they are derived from human wishes. In this respect they come near to psychiatric delusions. But they differ from them, too, apart from the more complicated structure of delusions. In the case of delusions, we emphasize as essential their being in contradiction with reality. Illusions need not necessarily be false—that is to say, unrealizable or in contradiction to reality. For instance, a middle-class girl may have the illusion that a prince will come and marry her. This is possible; and a few such cases have occurred. That the Messiah will come and found a golden age is much less likely. Whether one classifies this belief as an illusion or as something analogous to a delusion will depend on one's personal attitude. Examples of illusions which have proved true are not easy to find, but the illusion of the alchemists that all metals can be turned into gold might be one of them. The wish to have a great deal of gold, as much gold as possible, has, it is true, been a good deal damped by our present-day knowledge of the determinants of wealth, but chemistry no longer regards the transmutation of metals into gold as impossible. Thus we call a belief an illusion when a wish-fulfilment is a prominent factor in its motivation, and in doing so we disregard its relations to reality, just as the illusion itself sets no store by verification.

Having thus taken our bearings, let us return once more to the question of religious doctrines. We can now repeat that all of them are illusions and insusceptible of proof. No one can be compelled to think them true, to believe in them. Some of them are so improbable, so incompatible with everything we have laboriously discovered about the reality of the world, that we may compare them—if we pay proper regard to the psychological differences—to delusions. Of the reality value of most of them we cannot judge; just as they cannot be proved, so they cannot be refuted. We still know too little to make a critical approach to them. The riddles of the universe reveal themselves only slowly to our investigation; there are many questions to which science to-day can give no answer. But scientific work is the only road which can lead us to a knowledge of reality outside ourselves. It is once again merely an illusion to expect anything from intuition and introspection; they can give us nothing

but particulars about our own mental life, which are hard to interpret, never any information about the questions which religious doctrine finds it so easy to answer. It would be insolent to let one's own arbitrary will step into the breach and, according to one's personal estimate, declare this or that part of the religious system to be less or more acceptable. Such questions are too momentous for that; they might be called too sacred.

At this point one must expect to meet with an objection. 'Well then, if even obdurate sceptics admit that the assertions of religion cannot be refuted by reason, why should I not believe in them, since they have so much on their side—tradition, the agreement of mankind, and all the consolations they offer?' Why not, indeed? Just as no one can be forced to believe, so no one can be forced to disbelieve. But do not let us be satisfied with deceiving ourselves that arguments like these take us along the road of correct thinking. If ever there was a case of a lame excuse we have it here. Ignorance is ignorance; no right to believe anything can be derived from it. In other matters no sensible person will behave so irresponsibly or rest content with such feeble grounds for his opinions and for the line he takes. It is only in the highest and most sacred things that he allows himself to do so. In reality these are only attempts at pretending to oneself or to other people that one is still firmly attached to religion, when one has long since cut oneself loose from it. Where questions of religion are concerned, people are guilty of every possible sort of dishonesty and intellectual misdemeanour. Philosophers stretch the meaning of words until they retain scarcely anything of their original sense. They give the name of 'God' to some vague abstraction which they have created for themselves; having done so they can pose before all the world as deists, as believers in God, and they can even boast that they have recognized a higher, purer concept of God, notwithstanding that their God is now nothing more than an insubstantial shadow and no longer the mighty personality of religious doctrines. Critics persist in describing as 'deeply religious' anyone who admits to a sense of man's insignificance or impotence in the face of the universe, although what constitutes the essence of the religious attitude is not this feeling but only the next step after it, the reaction to it which seeks a remedy for it. The man who goes no further, but humbly acquiesces in

the small part which human beings play in the great world—such a man is, on the contrary, irreligious in the truest sense of the word.

To assess the truth-value of religious doctrines does not lie within the scope of the present enquiry. It is enough for us that we have recognized them as being, in their psychological nature, illusions. But we do not have to conceal the fact that this discovery also strongly influences our attitude to the question which must appear to many to be the most important of all. We know approximately at what periods and by what kind of men religious doctrines were created. If in addition we discover the motives which led to this, our attitude to the problem of religion will undergo a marked displacement. We shall tell ourselves that it would be very nice if there were a God who created the world and was a benevolent Providence, and if there were a moral order in the universe and an after-life; but it is a very striking fact that all this is exactly as we are bound to wish it to be. And it would be more remarkable still if our wretched, ignorant and downtrodden ancestors had succeeded in solving all these difficult riddles of the universe.

## VII

HAVING recognized religious doctrines as illusions, we are at once faced by a further question: may not other cultural assets of which we hold a high opinion and by which we let our lives be ruled be of a similar nature? Must not the assumptions that determine our political regulations be called illusions as well? and is it not the case that in our civilization the relations between the sexes are disturbed by an erotic illusion or a number of such illusions? And once our suspicion has been aroused, we shall not shrink from asking too whether our conviction that we can learn something about external reality through the use of observation and reasoning in scientific work—whether this conviction has any better foundation. Nothing ought to keep us from directing our observation to our own selves or from applying our thought to criticism of itself. In this field a number of investigations open out before us, whose results could not but be decisive for the construction of a '*Weltanschauung*'. We surmise, moreover, that such an effort would not be wasted and that it would at least in part justify our suspicion. But the author does not dispose of the means for undertaking so comprehensive a task; he needs must confine his work to following out one only of these illusions—that, namely, of religion.

But now the loud voice of our opponent brings us to a halt. We are called to account for our wrong-doing:

'Archaeological interests are no doubt most praiseworthy, but no one undertakes an excavation if by doing so he is going to undermine the habitations of the living so that they collapse and bury people under their ruins. The doctrines of religion are not a subject one can quibble about like any other. Our civilization is built up on them, and the maintenance of human society is based on the majority of men's believing in the truth of those doctrines. If men are taught that there is no almighty and all-just God, no divine world-order and no future life, they will feel exempt from all obligation to obey the precepts of civilization. Everyone will, without inhibition or fear, follow his asocial, egoistic instincts and seek to exercise his power; Chaos, which we have banished through many thousands of years of the work of civilization, will come again. Even if we

knew, and could prove, that religion was not in possession of the truth, we ought to conceal the fact and behave in the way prescribed by the philosophy of "As if"—and this in the interest of the preservation of us all. And apart from the danger of the undertaking, it would be a purposeless cruelty. Countless people find their one consolation in religious doctrines, and can only bear life with their help. You would rob them of their support, without having anything better to give them in exchange. It is admitted that so far science has not achieved much, but even if it had advanced much further it would not suffice for man. Man has imperative needs of another sort, which can never be satisfied by cold science; and it is very strange—indeed, it is the height of inconsistency—that a psychologist who has always insisted on what a minor part is played in human affairs by the intelligence as compared with the life of the instincts—that such a psychologist should now try to rob mankind of a precious wish-fulfilment and should propose to compensate them for it with intellectual nourishment.'

What a lot of accusations all at once! Nevertheless I am ready with rebuttals for them all; and, what is more, I shall assert the view that civilization runs a greater risk if we maintain our present attitude to religion than if we give it up.

But I hardly know where to begin my reply. Perhaps with the assurance that I myself regard my undertaking as completely harmless and free of risk. It is not I who am overvaluing the intellect this time. If people are as my opponents describe them —and I should not like to contradict them—then there is no danger of a devout believer's being overcome by my arguments and deprived of his faith. Besides, I have said nothing which other and better men have not said before me in a much more complete, forcible and impressive manner. Their names are well known, and I shall not cite them, for I should not like to give an impression that I am seeking to rank myself as one of them. All I have done—and this is the only thing that is new in my exposition—is to add some psychological foundation to the criticisms of my great predecessors. It is hardly to be expected that precisely this addition will produce the effect which was denied to those earlier efforts. No doubt I might be asked here what is the point of writing these things if I am certain that they will be ineffective. But I shall come back to that later.

The one person this publication may injure is myself. I shall

have to listen to the most disagreeable reproaches for my shallowness, narrow-mindedness and lack of idealism or of understanding for the highest interests of mankind. But on the one hand, such remonstrances are not new to me; and on the other, if a man has already learnt in his youth to rise superior to the disapproval of his contemporaries, what can it matter to him in his old age when he is certain soon to be beyond the reach of all favour or disfavour? In former times it was different. Then utterances such as mine brought with them a sure curtailment of one's earthly existence and an effective speeding-up of the opportunity for gaining a personal experience of the after-life. But, I repeat, those times are past and to-day writings such as this bring no more danger to their author than to their readers. The most that can happen is that the translation and distribution of his book will be forbidden in one country or another—and precisely, of course, in a country that is convinced of the high standard of its culture. But if one puts in any plea at all for the renunciation of wishes and for acquiescence in Fate, one must be able to tolerate this kind of injury too.

The further question occurred to me whether the publication of this work might not after all do harm. Not to a person, however, but to a cause—the cause of psycho-analysis. For it cannot be denied that psycho-analysis is my creation, and it has met with plenty of mistrust and ill-will. If I now come forward with such displeasing pronouncements, people will be only too ready to make a displacement from my person to psycho-analysis. 'Now we see,' they will say, 'where psycho-analysis leads to. The mask has fallen; it leads to a denial of God and of a moral ideal, as we always suspected. To keep us from this discovery we have been deluded into thinking that psycho-analysis has no *Weltanschauung* and never can construct one.'[1]

An outcry of this kind will really be disagreeable to me on account of my many fellow-workers, some of whom do not by any means share my attitude to the problems of religion. But psycho-analysis has already weathered many storms and now it must brave this fresh one. In point of fact psycho-analysis is a method of research, an impartial instrument, like the infinitesimal calculus, as it were. If a physicist were to discover with the latter's help that after a certain time the earth would be

[1] [See some remarks at the end of Chapter II of *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 95–6.]

destroyed, we would nevertheless hesitate to attribute destructive tendencies to the calculus itself and therefore to proscribe it. Nothing that I have said here against the truth-value of religions needed the support of psycho-analysis; it had been said by others long before analysis came into existence. If the application of the psycho-analytic method makes it possible to find a new argument against the truths of religion, *tant pis* for religion; but defenders of religion will by the same right make use of psycho-analysis in order to give full value to the affective significance of religious doctrines.

And now to proceed with our defence. Religion has clearly performed great services for human civilization. It has contributed much towards the taming of the asocial instincts. But not enough. It has ruled human society for many thousands of years and has had time to show what it can achieve. If it had succeeded in making the majority of mankind happy, in comforting them, in reconciling them to life and in making them into vehicles of civilization, no one would dream of attempting to alter the existing conditions. But what do we see instead? We see that an appallingly large number of people are dissatisfied with civilization and unhappy in it, and feel it as a yoke which must be shaken off; and that these people either do everything in their power to change that civilization, or else go so far in their hostility to it that they will have nothing to do with civilization or with a restriction of instinct. At this point it will be objected against us that this state of affairs is due to the very fact that religion has lost a part of its influence over human masses precisely because of the deplorable effect of the advances of science. We will note this admission and the reason given for it, and we shall make use of it later for our own purposes; but the objection itself has no force.

It is doubtful whether men were in general happier at a time when religious doctrines held unrestricted sway; more moral they certainly were not. They have always known how to externalize the precepts of religion and thus to nullify their intentions. The priests, whose duty it was to ensure obedience to religion, met them half-way in this. God's kindness must lay a restraining hand on His justice. One sinned, and then one made a sacrifice or did penance and then one was free to sin once more. Russian introspectiveness has reached the pitch of concluding that sin is indispensable for the enjoyment of all the

blessings of divine grace, so that, at bottom, sin is pleasing to God. It is no secret that the priests could only keep the masses submissive to religion by making such large concessions as these to the instinctual nature of man. Thus it was agreed: God alone is strong and good, man is weak and sinful. In every age immorality has found no less support in religion than morality has. If the achievements of religion in respect to man's happiness, susceptibility to culture[1] and moral control are no better than this, the question cannot but arise whether we are not overrating its necessity for mankind, and whether we do wisely in basing our cultural demands upon it.

Let us consider the unmistakable situation as it is to-day. We have heard the admission that religion no longer has the same influence on people that it used to. (We are here concerned with European Christian civilization.) And this is not because its promises have grown less but because people find them less credible. Let us admit that the reason—though perhaps not the only reason—for this change is the increase of the scientific spirit in the higher strata of human society. Criticism has whittled away the evidential value of religious documents, natural science has shown up the errors in them, and comparative research has been struck by the fatal resemblance between the religious ideas which we revere and the mental products of primitive peoples and times.

The scientific spirit brings about a particular attitude towards worldly matters; before religious matters it pauses for a little, hesitates, and finally there too crosses the threshold. In this process there is no stopping; the greater the number of men to whom the treasures of knowledge become accessible, the more widespread is the falling-away from religious belief—at first only from its obsolete and objectionable trappings, but later from its fundamental postulates as well. The Americans who instituted the 'monkey trial' at Dayton[2] have alone shown themselves consistent. Elsewhere the inevitable transition is accomplished by way of half-measures and insincerities.

[1] [The nature of 'susceptibility to culture' had been discussed by Freud in the first section of his paper on 'War and Death' (1915*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 283.]

[2] [A small town in Tennessee where, in 1925, a science teacher was prosecuted for breach of a State law by teaching that 'man is descended from the lower animals'.]

Civilization has little to fear from educated people and brain-workers. In them the replacement of religious motives for civilized behaviour by other, secular motives would proceed unobtrusively; moreover, such people are to a large extent themselves vehicles of civilization. But it is another matter with the great mass of the uneducated and oppressed, who have every reason for being enemies of civilization. So long as they do not discover that people no longer believe in God, all is well. But they will discover it, infallibly, even if this piece of writing of mine is not published. And they are ready to accept the results of scientific thinking, but without the change having taken place in them which scientific thinking brings about in people. Is there not a danger here that the hostility of these masses to civilization will throw itself against the weak spot that they have found in their task-mistress? If the sole reason why you must not kill your neighbour is because God has forbidden it and will severely punish you for it in this or the next life—then, when you learn that there is no God and that you need not fear His punishment, you will certainly kill your neighbour without hesitation, and you can only be prevented from doing so by mundane force. Thus either these dangerous masses must be held down most severely and kept most carefully away from any chance of intellectual awakening, or else the relationship between civilization and religion must undergo a fundamental revision.

## VIII

ONE might think that there would be no special difficulties in the way of carrying out this latter proposal. It is true that it would involve a certain amount of renunciation, but more would perhaps be gained than lost, and a great danger would be avoided. Everyone is frightened of it, however, as though it would expose civilization to a still greater danger. When St. Boniface[1] cut down the tree that was venerated as sacred by the Saxons the bystanders expected some fearful event to follow upon the sacrilege. But nothing happened, and the Saxons accepted baptism.

When civilization laid down the commandment that a man shall not kill the neighbour whom he hates or who is in his way or whose property he covets, this was clearly done in the interest of man's communal existence, which would not otherwise be practicable. For the murderer would draw down on himself the vengeance of the murdered man's kinsmen and the secret envy of others, who within themselves feel as much inclined as he does for such acts of violence. Thus he would not enjoy his revenge or his robbery for long, but would have every prospect of soon being killed himself. Even if he protected himself against his single foes by extraordinary strength and caution, he would be bound to succumb to a combination of weaker men. If a combination of this sort did not take place, the murdering would continue endlessly and the final outcome would be that men would exterminate one another. We should arrive at the same state of affairs between individuals as still persists in Corsica between families, though elsewhere only between nations. Insecurity of life, which is an equal danger for everyone, now unites men into a society which prohibits the individual from killing and reserves to itself the right to communal killing of anyone who violates the prohibition. Here, then, we have justice and punishment.

But we do not publish this rational explanation of the prohibition against murder. We assert that the prohibition has been issued by God. Thus we take it upon ourselves to guess His intentions, and we find that He, too, is unwilling for men

[1][The eighth-century, Devonshire-born, 'Apostle of Germany'.]

to exterminate one another. In behaving in this way we are investing the cultural prohibition with a quite special solemnity, but at the same time we risk making its observance dependent on belief in God. If we retrace this step—if we no longer attribute to God what is our own will and if we content ourselves with giving the social reason—then, it is true, we have renounced the transfiguration of the cultural prohibition, but we have also avoided the risk to it. But we gain something else as well. Through some kind of diffusion or infection, the character of sanctity and inviolability—of belonging to another world, one might say—has spread from a few major prohibitions on to every other cultural regulation, law and ordinance. But on these the halo often looks far from becoming: not only do they invalidate one another by giving contrary decisions at different times and places, but apart from this they show every sign of human inadequacy. It is easy to recognize in them things that can only be the product of short-sighted apprehensiveness or an expression of selfishly narrow interests or a conclusion based on insufficient premisses. The criticism which we cannot fail to level at them also diminishes to an unwelcome extent our respect for other, more justifiable cultural demands. Since it is an awkward task to separate what God Himself has demanded from what can be traced to the authority of an all-powerful parliament or a high judiciary, it would be an undoubted advantage if we were to leave God out altogether and honestly admit the purely human origin of all the regulations and precepts of civilization. Along with their pretended sanctity, these commandments and laws would lose their rigidity and unchangeableness as well. People could understand that they are made, not so much to rule them as, on the contrary, to serve their interests; and they would adopt a more friendly attitude to them, and instead of aiming at their abolition, would aim only at their improvement. This would be an important advance along the road which leads to becoming reconciled to the burden of civilization.

But here our plea for ascribing purely rational reasons to the precepts of civilization—that is to say, for deriving them from social necessity—is interrupted by a sudden doubt. We have chosen as our example the origin of the prohibition against murder. But does our account of it tally with historical truth? We fear not; it appears to be nothing but a rationalistic

construction. With the help of psycho-analysis, we have made a study of precisely this piece of the cultural history of mankind,[1] and, basing ourselves on it, we are bound to say that in reality things happened otherwise. Even in present-day man purely reasonable motives can effect little against passionate impulsions. How much weaker then must they have been in the human animal of primaeval times! Perhaps his descendants would even now kill one another without inhibition, if it were not that among those murderous acts there was one—the killing of the primitive father—which evoked an irresistible emotional reaction with momentous consequences. From it arose the commandment: Thou shalt not kill. Under totemism this commandment was restricted to the father-substitute; but it was later extended to other people, though even to-day it is not universally obeyed.

But, as was shown by arguments which I need not repeat here, the primal father was the original image of God, the model on which later generations have shaped the figure of God. Hence the religious explanation is right. God actually played a part in the genesis of that prohibition; it was His influence, not any insight into social necessity, which created it. And the displacement of man's will on to God is fully justified. For men knew that they had disposed of their father by violence, and in their reaction to that impious deed, they determined to respect his will thenceforward. Thus religious doctrine tells us the historical truth—though subject, it is true, to some modification and disguise—whereas our rational account disavows it.

We now observe that the store of religious ideas includes not only wish-fulfilments but important historical recollections. This concurrent influence of past and present must give religion a truly incomparable wealth of power. But perhaps with the help of an analogy yet another discovery may begin to dawn on us. Though it is not a good plan to transplant ideas far from the soil in which they grew up, yet here is a conformity which we cannot avoid pointing out. We know that a human child cannot successfully complete its development to the civilized stage without passing through a phase of neurosis sometimes of greater and sometimes of less distinctness. This is because so many instinctual demands which will later be

[1] [Cf. the fourth essay in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13).]

unserviceable cannot be suppressed by the rational operation of the child's intellect but have to be tamed by acts of repression, behind which, as a rule, lies the motive of anxiety. Most of these infantile neuroses are overcome spontaneously in the course of growing up, and this is especially true of the obsessional neuroses of childhood. The remainder can be cleared up later still by psycho-analytic treatment. In just the same way, one might assume, humanity as a whole, in its development through the ages, fell into states analogous to the neuroses,[1] and for the same reasons—namely because in the times of its ignorance and intellectual weakness the instinctual renunciations indispensable for man's communal existence had only been achieved by it by means of purely affective forces. The precipitates of these processes resembling repression which took place in prehistoric times still remained attached to civilization for long periods. Religion would thus be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father. If this view is right, it is to be supposed that a turning-away from religion is bound to occur with the fatal inevitability of a process of growth, and that we find ourselves at this very juncture in the middle of that phase of development. Our behaviour should therefore be modelled on that of a sensible teacher who does not oppose an impending new development but seeks to ease its path and mitigate the violence of its irruption. Our analogy does not, to be sure, exhaust the essential nature of religion. If, on the one hand, religion brings with it obsessional restrictions, exactly as an individual obsessional neurosis does, on the other hand it comprises a system of wishful illusions together with a disavowal[2] of reality, such as we find in an isolated form nowhere else but in amentia,[3] in a state of blissful hallucinatory confusion. But these are only analogies, by the help of which we endeavour to understand a social phenomenon; the pathology of the individual does not supply us with a fully valid counterpart.

It has been repeatedly pointed out (by myself and in

[1] [Freud returned to this question at the end of his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), p. 144, below in the last of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*) and in Chapter III of *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*).]

[2] [See the paper on 'Fetishism' (1927*e*), p. 153 below.]

[3] ['Meynert's amentia': a state of acute hallucinatory confusion.]

particular by Theodor Reik[1]) in how great detail the analogy between religion and obsessional neurosis can be followed out, and how many of the peculiarities and vicissitudes in the formation of religion can be understood in that light. And it tallies well with this that devout believers are safeguarded in a high degree against the risk of certain neurotic illnesses; their acceptance of the universal neurosis spares them the task of constructing a personal one.[2]

Our knowledge of the historical worth of certain religious doctrines increases our respect for them, but does not invalidate our proposal that they should cease to be put forward as the reasons for the precepts of civilization. On the contrary! Those historical residues have helped us to view religious teachings, as it were, as neurotic relics, and we may now argue that the time has probably come, as it does in an analytic treatment, for replacing the effects of repression by the results of the rational operation of the intellect. We may foresee, but hardly regret, that such a process of remoulding will not stop at renouncing the solemn transfiguration of cultural precepts, but that a general revision of them will result in many of them being done away with. In this way our appointed task of reconciling men to civilization will to a great extent be achieved. We need not deplore the renunciation of historical truth when we put forward rational grounds for the precepts of civilization. The truths contained in religious doctrines are after all so distorted and systematically disguised that the mass of humanity cannot recognize them as truth. The case is similar to what happens when we tell a child that new-born babies are brought by the stork. Here, too, we are telling the truth in symbolic clothing, for we know what the large bird signifies. But the child does not know it. He hears only the distorted part of what we say, and feels that he has been deceived; and we know how often his distrust of the grown-ups and his refractoriness actually take their start from this impression. We have become convinced that it is better to avoid such symbolic disguisings of the truth in what we tell children and not to withhold from them a

[1] [Cf. Freud, 'Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices' (1907*b*) and Reik (1927).]

[2] [Freud had often made this point before: e.g. in a sentence added in 1919 to his study on Leonardo da Vinci (1910*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **11**, 123.]

knowledge of the true state of affairs commensurate with their intellectual level.[1]

[1] [Freud later drew a distinction between what he termed 'material' and 'historical' truth in several passages. See, in particular, Section G of Part II of Chapter III of *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*). Cf. also an Editor's footnote on the subject in Chapter XII (C) of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **6**, 256.]

## IX

'You permit yourself contradictions which are hard to reconcile with one another. You begin by saying that a piece of writing like yours is quite harmless: no one will let himself be robbed of his faith by considerations of the sort put forward in it. But since it is nevertheless your intention, as becomes evident later on, to upset that faith, we may ask why in fact you are publishing your work? In another passage, moreover, you admit that it may be dangerous, indeed very dangerous, for someone to discover that people no longer believe in God. Hitherto he has been docile, but now he throws off his obedience to the precepts of civilization. Yet your whole contention that basing the commandments of civilization on religious grounds constitutes a danger for civilization rests on the assumption that the believer can be turned into an unbeliever. Surely that is a complete contradiction.

'And here is another. On the one hand you admit that men cannot be guided through their intelligence, they are ruled by their passions and their instinctual demands. But on the other hand you propose to replace the affective basis of their obedience to civilization by a rational one. Let who can understand this. To me it seems that it must be either one thing or the other.

'Besides, have you learned nothing from history? Once before an attempt of this kind was made to substitute reason for religion, officially and in the grand manner. Surely you remember the French Revolution and Robespierre? And you must also remember how short-lived and miserably ineffectual the experiment was? The same experiment is being repeated in Russia at the present time, and we need not feel curious as to its outcome. Do you not think we may take it for granted that men cannot do without religion?

'You have said yourself that religion is more than an obsessional neurosis. But you have not dealt with this other side of it. You are content to work out the analogy with a neurosis. Men, you say, must be freed from a neurosis. What else may be lost in the process is of no concern to you.'

The appearance of contradiction has probably come about

because I have dealt with complicated matters too hurriedly. But we can remedy this to some extent. I still maintain that what I have written is quite harmless in one respect. No believer will let himself be led astray from his faith by these or any similar arguments. A believer is bound to the teachings of religion by certain ties of affection. But there are undoubtedly countless other people who are not in the same sense believers. They obey the precepts of civilization because they let themselves be intimidated by the threats of religion, and they are afraid of religion so long as they have to consider it as a part of the reality which hems them in. They are the people who break away as soon as they are allowed to give up their belief in the reality-value of religion. But they too are unaffected by arguments. They cease to fear religion when they observe that others do not fear it; and it was of them that I asserted that they would get to know about the decline of religious influence even if I did not publish my work. [Cf. p. 39.]

But I think you yourself attach more weight to the other contradiction which you charge me with. Since men are so little accessible to reasonable arguments and are so entirely governed by their instinctual wishes, why should one set out to deprive them of an instinctual satisfaction and replace it by reasonable arguments? It is true that men are like this; but have you asked yourself whether they *must* be like this, whether their innermost nature necessitates it? Can an anthropologist give the cranial index of a people whose custom it is to deform their children's heads by bandaging them round from their earliest years? Think of the depressing contrast between the radiant intelligence of a healthy child and the feeble intellectual powers of the average adult. Can we be quite certain that it is not precisely religious education which bears a large share of the blame for this relative atrophy? I think it would be a very long time before a child who was not influenced began to trouble himself about God and things in another world. Perhaps his thoughts on these matters would then take the same paths as they did with his forefathers. But we do not wait for such a development; we introduce him to the doctrines of religion at an age when he is neither interested in them nor capable of grasping their import. Is it not true that the two main points in the programme for the education of children to-day are retardation of sexual development and premature religious

influence? Thus by the time the child's intellect awakens, the doctrines of religion have already become unassailable. But are you of opinion that it is very conducive to the strengthening of the intellectual function that so important a field should be closed against it by the threat of Hell-fire? When a man has once brought himself to accept uncritically all the absurdities that religious doctrines put before him and even to overlook the contradictions between them, we need not be greatly surprised at the weakness of his intellect. But we have no other means of controlling our instinctual nature but our intelligence. How can we expect people who are under the dominance of prohibitions of thought to attain the psychological ideal, the primacy of the intelligence? You know, too, that women in general are said to suffer from 'physiological feeble-mindedness'[1]—that is, from a lesser intelligence than men. The fact itself is disputable and its interpretation doubtful, but one argument in favour of this intellectual atrophy being of a secondary nature is that women labour under the harshness of an early prohibition against turning their thoughts to what would most have interested them—namely, the problems of sexual life. So long as a person's early years are influenced not only by a sexual inhibition of thought but also by a religious inhibition and by a loyal inhibition[2] derived from this, we cannot really tell what in fact he is like.

But I will moderate my zeal and admit the possibility that I, too, am chasing an illusion. Perhaps the effect of the religious prohibition of thought may not be so bad as I suppose; perhaps it will turn out that human nature remains the same even if education is not abused in order to subject people to religion. I do not know and you cannot know either. It is not only the great problems of this life that seem insoluble at the present time; many lesser questions too are difficult to answer. But you must admit that here we are justified in having a hope for the future—that perhaps there is a treasure to be dug up capable of enriching civilization and that it is worth making the experiment of an irreligious education. Should the experiment prove unsatisfactory I am ready to give up the reform and to return

[1] [The phrase was used by Moebius (1903). Cf. Freud's early paper on 'civilized' sexual morality (1908*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **9**, 199, where the present argument is anticipated.]

[2] [I.e. in regard to the Monarchy.]

to my earlier, purely descriptive judgement that man is a creature of weak intelligence who is ruled by his instinctual wishes.

On another point I agree with you unreservedly. It is certainly senseless to begin by trying to do away with religion by force and at a single blow. Above all, because it would be hopeless. The believer will not let his belief be torn from him, either by arguments or by prohibitions. And even if this did succeed with some it would be cruelty. A man who has been taking sleeping draughts for tens of years is naturally unable to sleep if his sleeping draught is taken away from him. That the effect of religious consolations may be likened to that of a narcotic is well illustrated by what is happening in America. There they are now trying—obviously under the influence of petticoat government—to deprive people of all stimulants, intoxicants, and other pleasure-producing substances, and instead, by way of compensation, are surfeiting them with piety. This is another experiment as to whose outcome we need not feel curious [p. 46].[1]

Thus I must contradict you when you go on to argue that men are completely unable to do without the consolation of the religious illusion, that without it they could not bear the troubles of life and the cruelties of reality. That is true, certainly, of the men into whom you have instilled the sweet—or bitter-sweet—poison from childhood onwards. But what of the other men, who have been sensibly brought up? Perhaps those who do not suffer from the neurosis will need no intoxicant to deaden it. They will, it is true, find themselves in a difficult situation. They will have to admit to themselves the full extent of their helplessness and their insignificance in the machinery of the universe; they can no longer be the centre of creation, no longer the object of tender care on the part of a beneficent Providence. They will be in the same position as a child who has left the parental house where he was so warm and comfortable. But surely infantilism is destined to be surmounted. Men cannot remain children for ever; they must in the end go out into 'hostile life'. We may call this '*education to reality*'. Need I confess to you that the sole purpose of my book is to point out the necessity for this forward step?

[1] [This was written in the middle of the period of National Prohibition in the United States (1920–33).]

You are afraid, probably, that they will not stand up to the hard test? Well, let us at least hope they will. It is something, at any rate, to know that one is thrown upon one's own resources. One learns then to make a proper use of them. And men are not entirely without assistance. Their scientific knowledge has taught them much since the days of the Deluge, and it will increase their power still further. And, as for the great necessities of Fate, against which there is no help, they will learn to endure them with resignation. Of what use to them is the mirage of wide acres in the moon, whose harvest no one has ever yet seen? As honest smallholders on this earth they will know how to cultivate their plot in such a way that it supports them. By withdrawing their expectations from the other world and concentrating all their liberated energies into their life on earth, they will probably succeed in achieving a state of things in which life will become tolerable for everyone and civilization no longer oppressive to anyone. Then, with one of our fellow-unbelievers, they will be able to say without regret:

Den Himmel überlassen wir
Den Engeln und den Spatzen.[1]

[1] ['We leave Heaven to the angels and the sparrows.' From Heine's poem *Deutschland* (Caput I). The word which is here translated 'fellow-unbelievers'—in German '*Unglaubensgenossen*'—was applied by Heine himself to Spinoza. It had been quoted by Freud as an example of a particular kind of joke-technique in his book on jokes (1905*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **8**, 77.]

## X

'THAT sounds splendid! A race of men who have renounced all illusions and have thus become capable of making their existence on earth tolerable! I, however, cannot share your expectations. And that is not because I am the obstinate reactionary you perhaps take me for. No, it is because I am sensible. We seem now to have exchanged roles: you emerge as an enthusiast who allows himself to be carried away by illusions, and I stand for the claims of reason, the rights of scepticism. What you have been expounding seems to me to be built upon errors which, following your example, I may call illusions, because they betray clearly enough the influence of your wishes. You pin your hope on the possibility that generations which have not experienced the influence of religious doctrines in early childhood will easily attain the desired primacy of the intelligence over the life of the instincts. This is surely an illusion: in this decisive respect human nature is hardly likely to change. If I am not mistaken—one knows so little about other civilizations—there are even to-day peoples which do not grow up under the pressure of a religious system, and yet they approach no nearer to your ideal than the rest. If you want to expel religion from our European civilization, you can only do it by means of another system of doctrines; and such a system would from the outset take over all the psychological characteristics of religion—the same sanctity, rigidity and intolerance, the same prohibition of thought—for its own defence. You have to have something of the kind in order to meet the requirements of education. And you cannot do without education. The path from the infant at the breast to the civilized man is a long one; too many human young would go astray on it and fail to reach their life-tasks at the proper time if they were left without guidance to their own development. The doctrines which had been applied in their upbringing would always set limits to the thinking of their riper years—which is exactly what you reproach religion with doing to-day. Do you not observe that it is an ineradicable and innate defect of our and every other civilization, that it imposes on children, who are driven by instinct and weak in intellect, the making of decisions which only

the mature intelligence of adults can vindicate? But civilization cannot do otherwise, because of the fact that mankind's age-long development is compressed into a few years of childhood; and it is only by emotional forces that the child can be induced to master the task set before it. Such, then, are the prospects for your "primacy of the intellect".

'And now you must not be surprised if I plead on behalf of retaining the religious doctrinal system as the basis of education and of man's communal life. This is a practical problem, not a question of reality-value. Since, for the sake of preserving our civilization, we cannot postpone influencing the individual until he has become ripe for civilization (and many would never become so in any case), since we are obliged to impose on the growing child some doctrinal system which shall operate in him as an axiom that admits of no criticism, it seems to me that the religious system is by far the most suitable for the purpose. And it is so, of course, precisely on account of its wish-fulfilling and consolatory power, by which you claim to recognize it as an "illusion". In view of the difficulty of discovering anything about reality—indeed, of the doubt whether it is possible for us to do so at all—we must not overlook the fact that human needs, too, are a piece of reality, and, in fact, an important piece and one that concerns us especially closely.

'Another advantage of religious doctrine resides, to my mind, in one of its characteristics to which you seem to take particular exception. For it allows of a refinement and sublimation of ideas, which make it possible for it to be divested of most of the traces which it bears of primitive and infantile thinking. What then remains is a body of ideas which science no longer contradicts and is unable to disprove. These modifications of religious doctrine, which you have condemned as half-measures and compromises, make it possible to avoid the cleft between the uneducated masses and the philosophic thinker, and to preserve the common bond between them which is so important for the safeguarding of civilization. With this, there would be no need to fear that the men of the people would discover that the upper strata of society "no longer believe in God". I think I have now shown that your endeavours come down to an attempt to replace a proved and emotionally valuable illusion by another one, which is unproved and without emotional value.'

You will not find me inaccessible to your criticism. I know how difficult it is to avoid illusions; perhaps the hopes I have confessed to are of an illusory nature, too. But I hold fast to one distinction. Apart from the fact that no penalty is imposed for not sharing them, my illusions are not, like religious ones, incapable of correction. They have not the character of a delusion. If experience should show—not to me, but to others after me, who think as I do—that we have been mistaken, we will give up our expectations. Take my attempt for what it is. A psychologist who does not deceive himself about the difficulty of finding one's bearings in this world, makes an endeavour to assess the development of man, in the light of the small portion of knowledge he has gained through a study of the mental processes of individuals during their development from child to adult. In so doing, the idea forces itself upon him that religion is comparable to a childhood neurosis, and he is optimistic enough to suppose that mankind will surmount this neurotic phase, just as so many children grow out of their similar neurosis. These discoveries derived from individual psychology may be insufficient, their application to the human race unjustified, and his optimism unfounded. I grant you all these uncertainties. But often one cannot refrain from saying what one thinks, and one excuses oneself on the ground that one is not giving it out for more than it is worth.

And there are two points that I must dwell on a little longer. Firstly, the weakness of my position does not imply any strengthening of yours. I think you are defending a lost cause. We may insist as often as we like that man's intellect is powerless in comparison with his instinctual life, and we may be right in this. Nevertheless, there is something peculiar about this weakness. The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest till it has gained a hearing. Finally, after a countless succession of rebuffs, it succeeds. This is one of the few points on which one may be optimistic about the future of mankind, but it is in itself a point of no small importance. And from it one can derive yet other hopes. The primacy of the intellect lies, it is true, in a distant, distant future, but probably not in an *infinitely* distant one. It will presumably set itself the same aims as those whose realization you expect from your God (of course within human limits—so far as external reality, *'Ανάγκη*, allows it), namely the love of man and the decrease of suffering. This being so, we may

tell ourselves that our antagonism is only a temporary one and not irreconcilable. We desire the same things, but you are more impatient, more exacting, and—why should I not say it?—more self-seeking than I and those on my side. You would have the state of bliss begin directly after death; you expect the impossible from it and you will not surrender the claims of the individual. Our God, *Λόγος*,[1] will fulfil whichever of these wishes nature outside us allows, but he will do it very gradually, only in the unforeseeable future, and for a new generation of men. He promises no compensation for us, who suffer grievously from life. On the way to this distant goal your religious doctrines will have to be discarded, no matter whether the first attempts fail, or whether the first substitutes prove to be untenable. You know why: in the long run nothing can withstand reason and experience, and the contradiction which religion offers to both is all too palpable. Even purified religious ideas cannot escape this fate, so long as they try to preserve anything of the consolation of religion. No doubt if they confine themselves to a belief in a higher spiritual being, whose qualities are indefinable and whose purposes cannot be discerned, they will be proof against the challenge of science; but then they will also lose their hold on human interest.

And secondly: observe the difference between your attitude to illusions and mine. You have to defend the religious illusion with all your might. If it becomes discredited—and indeed the threat to it is great enough—then your world collapses. There is nothing left for you but to despair of everything, of civilization and the future of mankind. From that bondage I am, we are, free. Since we are prepared to renounce a good part of our infantile wishes, we can bear it if a few of our expectations turn out to be illusions.

Education freed from the burden of religious doctrines will not, it may be, effect much change in men's psychological nature. Our god *Λόγος* is perhaps not a very almighty one, and he may only be able to fulfil a small part of what his predecessors have promised. If we have to acknowledge this we shall accept it with resignation. We shall not on that account lose our interest in the world and in life, for we have one sure support

[1] The twin gods *Λόγος* [*Logos:* Reason] and *Ἀνάγκη* [*Ananke:* Necessity] of the Dutch writer Multatuli. [Cf. an Editor's footnote to 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 168.]

which you lack. We believe that it is possible for scientific work to gain some knowledge about the reality of the world, by means of which we can increase our power and in accordance with which we can arrange our life. If this belief is an illusion, then we are in the same position as you. But science has given us evidence by its numerous and important successes that it is no illusion. Science has many open enemies, and many more secret ones, among those who cannot forgive her for having weakened religious faith and for threatening to overthrow it. She is reproached for the smallness of the amount she has taught us and for the incomparably greater field she has left in obscurity. But, in this, people forget how young she is, how difficult her beginnings were and how infinitesimally small is the period of time since the human intellect has been strong enough for the tasks she sets. Are we not all at fault, in basing our judgements on periods of time that are too short? We should make the geologists our pattern. People complain of the unreliability of science—how she announces as a law to-day what the next generation recognizes as an error and replaces by a new law whose accepted validity lasts no longer. But this is unjust and in part untrue. The transformations of scientific opinion are developments, advances, not revolutions. A law which was held at first to be universally valid proves to be a special case of a more comprehensive uniformity, or is limited by another law, not discovered till later; a rough approximation to the truth is replaced by a more carefully adapted one, which in turn awaits further perfectioning. There are various fields where we have not yet surmounted a phase of research in which we make trial with hypotheses that soon have to be rejected as inadequate; but in other fields we already possess an assured and almost unalterable core of knowledge. Finally, an attempt has been made to discredit scientific endeavour in a radical way, on the ground that, being bound to the conditions of our own organization, it can yield nothing else than subjective results, whilst the real nature of things outside ourselves remains inaccessible. But this is to disregard several factors which are of decisive importance for the understanding of scientific work. In the first place, our organization—that is, our mental apparatus—has been developed precisely in the attempt to explore the external world, and it must therefore have realized in its structure some degree of expediency; in the

second place, it is itself a constituent part of the world which we set out to investigate, and it readily admits of such an investigation; thirdly, the task of science is fully covered if we limit it to showing how the world must appear to us in consequence of the particular character of our organization; fourthly, the ultimate findings of science, precisely because of the way in which they are acquired, are determined not only by our organization but by the things which have affected that organization; finally, the problem of the nature of the world without regard to our percipient mental apparatus is an empty abstraction, devoid of practical interest.

No, our science is no illusion. But an illusion it would be to suppose that what science cannot give us we can get elsewhere.

# CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS
(1930 [1929])

# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

## DAS UNBEHAGEN IN DER KULTUR

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1930 Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag. Pp. 136.
1931 2nd ed. (Reprint of 1st ed., with some additions.)
1934 *G.S.*, **12**, 29–114.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 421–506.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

*Civilization and its Discontents*

1930 London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis. New York: Cape and Smith. Pp. 144. (Tr. Joan Riviere.)

The present translation is based on that published in 1930.

The first chapter of the German original was published slightly in advance of the rest of the book in *Psychoanal. Bewegung*, **1** (4), November-December, 1929. The fifth chapter appeared separately in the next issue of the same periodical, **2** (1), January-February, 1930. Two or three extra footnotes were included in the edition of 1931 and a new final sentence was added to the work. None of these additions appeared in the earlier version of the English translation.

Freud had finished *The Future of an Illusion* in the autumn of 1927. During the following two years, chiefly, no doubt, on account of his illness, he produced very little. But in the summer of 1929 he began writing another book, once more on a sociological subject. The first draft was finished by the end of July; the book was sent to the printers early in November and was actually published before the end of the year, though it carried the date '1930' on its title-page (Jones, 1957, 157–8).

The original title chosen for it by Freud was '*Das Unglück in der Kultur*' ('Unhappiness in Civilization'); but '*Unglück*' was later altered to '*Unbehagen*'—a word for which it was difficult to

choose an English equivalent, though the French '*malaise*' might have served. Freud suggested '*Man's Discomfort in Civilization*' in a letter to his translator, Mrs. Riviere; but it was she herself who found the ideal solution of the difficulty in the title that was finally adopted.

The main theme of the book—the irremediable antagonism between the demands of instinct and the restrictions of civilization—may be traced back to some of Freud's very earliest psychological writings. Thus, on May 31, 1897, he wrote to Fliess that 'incest is anti-social and civilization consists in a progressive renunciation of it' (Freud, 1950*a*, Draft N); and a year later, in a paper on 'Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses' (1898*a*), he wrote that 'we may justly hold our civilization responsible for the spread of neurasthenia'. Nevertheless, in his early writings Freud does not seem to have regarded repression as being wholly due to external social influences. Though in his *Three Essays* (1905*d*) he spoke of 'the inverse relation holding between civilization and the free development of sexuality' (*Standard Ed.*, **7**, 242), elsewhere in the same work he had the following comment to make on the dams against the sexual instinct that emerge during the latency period: 'One gets an impression from civilized children that the construction of these dams is a product of education, and no doubt education has much to do with it. But in reality this development is organically determined and fixed by heredity, and it can occasionally occur without any help at all from education.' (Ibid., 177–8.)

The notion of there being an 'organic repression' paving the way to civilization—a notion that is expanded in the two long footnotes at the beginning and end of Chapter IV (pp. 99 f. and 105 ff. below)—goes back to the same early period. In a letter to Fliess of November 14, 1897, Freud wrote that he had often suspected 'that something organic played a part in repression' (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 75). He went on, in precisely the sense of these footnotes, to suggest the importance as factors in repression of the adoption of an upright carriage and the replacement of smell by sight as the dominant sense. A still earlier hint at the same idea occurs in a letter of January 11, 1897 (ibid., Letter 55). In Freud's published writings the only mentions of these ideas before the present one seem to be a short passage in the

'Rat Man' analysis (1909*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **10**, 247–8 and a still shorter one in the second paper on the psychology of love (1912*d*), ibid., **11**, 189. In particular, no analysis of the deeper, internal origins of civilization is to be found in what is by far the longest of Freud's earlier discussions of the subject,[1] his paper on ' "Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness' (1908*d*), which gives the impression of the restrictions of civilization as something imposed from without.

But indeed no clear evaluation of the part played in these restrictions by internal and external influences and of their reciprocal effects was possible till Freud's investigations of ego-psychology had led him to his hypotheses of the super-ego and its origin from the individual's earliest object-relations. It is because of this that such a large part of the present work (especially in Chapters VII and VIII) is concerned with the further exploration and clarification of the nature of the sense of guilt, and that Freud (on p. 134) declares his 'intention to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization'. And this, in turn, is the ground for the second major side-issue of this work (though neither of them is in fact a side-issue)—the destructive instinct.

The history of Freud's views on the aggressive or destructive instinct is a complicated one and can only be summarily indicated here. Throughout his earlier writings the context in which he viewed it predominantly was that of sadism. His first lengthy discussions of this were in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905*d*), where it appeared as one of the 'component instincts' of the sexual instinct. 'Thus', he wrote in Section 2 (B) of the first essay, 'sadism would correspond to an aggressive component of the sexual instinct which has become independent and exaggerated and, by displacement, has usurped the leading position' (*Standard Ed.*, **7**, 158). Nevertheless, later on, in Section 4 of the second essay, the original independence of the aggressive impulses was recognized: 'It may be assumed that the impulses of cruelty arise from sources which are in fact independent of sexuality, but may become united with it at an early

[1] The subject is touched on in many other works, among which may be mentioned a paper on 'The Resistances to Psycho-Analysis' (1925*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 219 ff., the first pages of *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*), and the last paragraphs of *Why War?* (1933*b*).

stage' (ibid., 193*n.*). The independent sources indicated were to be traced to the self-preservative instincts. This passage was altered in the edition of 1915, where it was stated that 'the impulse of cruelty arises from the instinct for mastery' and the phrase about its being 'independent of sexuality' was omitted. But already, in 1909, in the course of combating Adler's theories, Freud had made a much more sweeping pronouncement. In Section II of the third chapter of the 'Little Hans' case history (1909*b*), Freud wrote: 'I cannot bring myself to assume the existence of a special aggressive instinct alongside of the familiar instincts of self-preservation and of sex, and on an equal footing with them' (ibid., **10**, 140).[1] The reluctance to accept an aggressive instinct independent of the libido was assisted by the hypothesis of narcissism. Impulses of aggressiveness, and of hatred too, had from the first seemed to belong to the self-preservative instinct, and, since this was now subsumed under the libido, no independent aggressive instinct was called for. And this was so in spite of the bipolarity of object-relations, of the frequent admixtures of love and hate, and of the complex origin of hate itself. (See 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 138–9.) It was not until Freud's hypothesis of a 'death instinct' that a truly independent aggressive instinct came into view in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*). (See, in particular, Chapter VI, ibid., **18**, 52–5.) But it is to be remarked that even there, and in Freud's later writings (for instance, in Chapter IV of *The Ego and the Id*), the aggressive instinct was still something secondary, derived from the primary self-destructive death instinct. This is still true of the present work, even though here the stress is much more upon the death instinct's manifestations *outwards*; and it is also true of the further discussions of the problem in the later part of Lecture XXXII of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*), and at more than one point in the posthumously published *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]). It is nevertheless tempting to quote a couple of sentences from a letter written by Freud on May 27,

[1] A footnote added in 1923 brought the inevitable qualification of this judgement. Since the time at which it was made 'I have myself', writes Freud, 'been obliged to assert the existence of an "aggressive instinct", but it is different from Adler's. I prefer to call it the "destructive" or "death instinct".' Adler's had in fact been more in the nature of an instinct of self-assertiveness.

1937, to Princess Marie Bonaparte,[1] in which he appears to be hinting at a greater original independence of external destructiveness: 'The turning inwards of the aggressive instinct is of course the counterpart to the turning outwards of the libido when it passes over from the ego to objects. We should have a neat schematic picture if we supposed that originally, at the beginning of life, all libido was directed to the inside and all aggressiveness to the outside, and that in the course of life this gradually altered. But perhaps this may not be correct.' It is only fair to add that in his next letter Freud wrote: 'I beg you not to set too much value on my remarks about the destructive instinct. They were only made at random and would have to be carefully thought over before being published. Moreover there is little that is new in them.'

It will thus be obvious that *Civilization and its Discontents* is a work whose interest ranges far beyond sociology.

Considerable portions of the earlier (1930) translation of this work were included in Rickman's *Civilization, War and Death: Selections from Three Works by Sigmund Freud* (1939, 26–81).

[1] She has very kindly allowed us to reproduce it here. The whole passage will also be found (in a different translation) in Appendix A (No. 33) of Ernest Jones's biography (Jones, 1957, 494). The topic had been considered by Freud in Section VI of the paper, written shortly before this letter, on 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937*c*).

# CIVILIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

## I

IT is impossible to escape the impression that people commonly use false standards of measurement—that they seek power, success and wealth for themselves and admire them in others, and that they underestimate what is of true value in life. And yet, in making any general judgement of this sort, we are in danger of forgetting how variegated the human world and its mental life are. There are a few men from whom their contemporaries do not withhold admiration, although their greatness rests on attributes and achievements which are completely foreign to the aims and ideals of the multitude. One might easily be inclined to suppose that it is after all only a minority which appreciates these great men, while the large majority cares nothing for them. But things are probably not as simple as that, thanks to the discrepancies between people's thoughts and their actions, and to the diversity of their wishful impulses.

One of these exceptional few calls himself my friend in his letters to me. I had sent him my small book that treats religion as an illusion,[1] and he answered that he entirely agreed with my judgement upon religion, but that he was sorry I had not properly appreciated the true source of religious sentiments. This, he says, consists in a peculiar feeling, which he himself is never without, which he finds confirmed by many others, and which he may suppose is present in millions of people. It is a feeling which he would like to call a sensation of 'eternity', a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded—as it were, 'oceanic'. This feeling, he adds, is a purely subjective fact, not an article of faith; it brings with it no assurance of personal immortality, but it is the source of the religious energy which is seized upon by the various Churches and religious systems, directed by them into particular channels, and doubtless also exhausted by them. One may, he thinks, rightly call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion.

The views expressed by the friend whom I so much honour,

[1] [*The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*); see p. 5 above.]

and who himself once praised the magic of illusion in a poem,[1] caused me no small difficulty. I cannot discover this 'oceanic' feeling in myself. It is not easy to deal scientifically with feelings. One can attempt to describe their physiological signs. Where this is not possible—and I am afraid that the oceanic feeling too will defy this kind of characterization—nothing remains but to fall back on the ideational content which is most readily associated with the feeling. If I have understood my friend rightly, he means the same thing by it as the consolation offered by an original and somewhat eccentric dramatist to his hero who is facing a self-inflicted death. 'We cannot fall out of this world.' [2] That is to say, it is a feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole. I may remark that to me this seems something rather in the nature of an intellectual perception, which is not, it is true, without an accompanying feeling-tone, but only such as would be present with any other act of thought of equal range. From my own experience I could not convince myself of the primary nature of such a feeling. But this gives me no right to deny that it does in fact occur in other people. The only question is whether it is being correctly interpreted and whether it ought to be regarded as the *fons et origo* of the whole need for religion.

I have nothing to suggest which could have a decisive influence on the solution of this problem. The idea of men's receiving an intimation of their connection with the world around them through an immediate feeling which is from the outset directed to that purpose sounds so strange and fits in so badly with the fabric of our psychology that one is justified in attempting to discover a psycho-analytic—that is, a genetic—explanation of such a feeling. The following line of thought suggests itself. Normally, there is nothing of which we are more certain than the feeling of our self, of our own ego.[3] This ego

[1] [*Footnote added* 1931:] *Liluli* [1919].—Since the publication of his two books *La vie de Ramakrishna* [1929] and *La vie de Vivekananda* (1930), I need no longer hide the fact that the friend spoken of in the text is Romain Rolland. [Romain Rolland had written to Freud about the 'oceanic feeling' in a letter of December 5, 1927, very soon after the publication of *The Future of an Illusion*.]

[2] Christian Dietrich Grabbe [1801–36], *Hannibal*: 'Ja, aus der Welt werden wir nicht fallen. Wir sind einmal darin.' ['Indeed, we shall not fall out of this world. We are in it once and for all.']

[3] [Some remarks on Freud's use of the terms 'ego' and 'self' will be

appears to us as something autonomous and unitary, marked off distinctly from everything else. That such an appearance is deceptive, and that on the contrary the ego is continued inwards, without any sharp delimitation, into an unconscious mental entity which we designate as the id and for which it serves as a kind of façade—this was a discovery first made by psycho-analytic research, which should still have much more to tell us about the relation of the ego to the id. But towards the outside, at any rate, the ego seems to maintain clear and sharp lines of demarcation. There is only one state—admittedly an unusual state, but not one that can be stigmatized as pathological—in which it does not do this. At the height of being in love the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all the evidence of his senses, a man who is in love declares that 'I' and 'you' are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact.[1] What can be temporarily done away with by a physiological [i.e. normal] function must also, of course, be liable to be disturbed by pathological processes. Pathology has made us acquainted with a great number of states in which the boundary lines between the ego and the external world become uncertain or in which they are actually drawn incorrectly. There are cases in which parts of a person's own body, even portions of his own mental life—his perceptions, thoughts and feelings—, appear alien to him and as not belonging to his ego; there are other cases in which he ascribes to the external world things that clearly originate in his own ego and that ought to be acknowledged by it. Thus even the feeling of our own ego is subject to disturbances and the boundaries of the ego are not constant.

Further reflection tells us that the adult's ego-feeling cannot have been the same from the beginning. It must have gone through a process of development, which cannot, of course, be demonstrated but which admits of being constructed with a fair degree of probability.[2] An infant at the breast does not as yet

found in the Editor's Introduction to *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 7.]

[1] [Cf. a footnote to Section III of the Schreber case history (1911*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **12**, 69.]

[2] Cf. the many writings on the topic of ego-development and ego-feeling, dating from Ferenczi's paper on 'Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality' (1913) to Federn's contributions of 1926, 1927 and later.

distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of the sensations flowing in upon him. He gradually learns to do so, in response to various promptings.[1] He must be very strongly impressed by the fact that some sources of excitation, which he will later recognize as his own bodily organs, can provide him with sensations at any moment, whereas other sources evade him from time to time—among them what he desires most of all, his mother's breast—and only reappear as a result of his screaming for help. In this way there is for the first time set over against the ego an 'object', in the form of something which exists 'outside' and which is only forced to appear by a special action.[2] A further incentive to a disengagement of the ego from the general mass of sensations—that is, to the recognition of an 'outside', an external world—is provided by the frequent, manifold and unavoidable sensations of pain and unpleasure the removal and avoidance of which is enjoined by the pleasure principle, in the exercise of its unrestricted domination. A tendency arises to separate from the ego everything that can become a source of such unpleasure, to throw it outside and to create a pure pleasure-ego which is confronted by a strange and threatening 'outside'. The boundaries of this primitive pleasure-ego cannot escape rectification through experience. Some of the things that one is unwilling to give up, because they give pleasure, are nevertheless not ego but object; and some sufferings that one seeks to expel turn out to be inseparable from the ego in virtue of their internal origin. One comes to learn a procedure by which, through a deliberate direction of one's sensory activities and through suitable muscular action, one can differentiate between what is internal—what belongs to the ego—and what is external—what emanates from the outer world. In this way one makes the first step towards the introduction of the reality principle which is to dominate future development.[3]

[1] [In this paragraph Freud was going over familiar ground. He had discussed the matter not long before, in his paper on 'Negation' (1925*h*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 236–8. But he had dealt with it on several earlier occasions. See, for instance, 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915*c*), ibid., **14**, 119 and 134–6, and *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), ibid., **5**, 565–6. Its essence, indeed, is already to be found in the 'Project' of 1895, Sections 1, 2, 11 and 16 of Part I (Freud, 1950*a*).]

[2] [The 'specific action' of the 'Project'.]

[3] [Cf. 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **12**, 222–3.]

This differentiation, of course, serves the practical purpose of enabling one to defend oneself against sensations of unpleasure which one actually feels or with which one is threatened. In order to fend off certain unpleasurable excitations arising from within, the ego can use no other methods than those which it uses against unpleasure coming from without, and this is the starting-point of important pathological disturbances.

In this way, then, the ego detaches itself from the external world. Or, to put it more correctly, originally the ego includes everything, later it separates off an external world from itself. Our present ego-feeling is, therefore, only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive—indeed, an all-embracing—feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it. If we may assume that there are many people in whose mental life this primary ego-feeling has persisted to a greater or less degree, it would exist in them side by side with the narrower and more sharply demarcated ego-feeling of maturity, like a kind of counterpart to it. In that case, the ideational contents appropriate to it would be precisely those of limitlessness and of a bond with the universe—the same ideas with which my friend elucidated the 'oceanic' feeling.

But have we a right to assume the survival of something that was originally there, alongside of what was later derived from it? Undoubtedly. There is nothing strange in such a phenomenon, whether in the mental field or elsewhere. In the animal kingdom we hold to the view that the most highly developed species have proceeded from the lowest; and yet we find all the simple forms still in existence to-day. The race of the great saurians is extinct and has made way for the mammals; but a true representative of it, the crocodile, still lives among us. This analogy may be too remote, and it is also weakened by the circumstance that the lower species which survive are for the most part not the true ancestors of the present-day more highly developed species. As a rule the intermediate links have died out and are known to us only through reconstruction. In the realm of the mind, on the other hand, what is primitive is so commonly preserved alongside of the transformed version which has arisen from it that it is unnecessary to give instances as evidence. When this happens it is usually in consequence of a divergence in development: one portion (in the quantitative sense) of an

attitude or instinctual impulse has remained unaltered, while another portion has undergone further development.

This brings us to the more general problem of preservation in the sphere of the mind. The subject has hardly been studied as yet;[1] but it is so attractive and important that we may be allowed to turn our attention to it for a little, even though our excuse is insufficient. Since we overcame the error of supposing that the forgetting we are familiar with signified a destruction of the memory-trace—that is, its annihilation—we have been inclined to take the opposite view, that in mental life nothing which has once been formed can perish—that everything is somehow preserved and that in suitable circumstances (when, for instance, regression goes back far enough) it can once more be brought to light. Let us try to grasp what this assumption involves by taking an analogy from another field. We will choose as an example the history of the Eternal City.[2] Historians tell us that the oldest Rome was the *Roma Quadrata*, a fenced settlement on the Palatine. Then followed the phase of the *Septimontium*, a federation of the settlements on the different hills; after that came the city bounded by the Servian wall; and later still, after all the transformations during the periods of the republic and the early Caesars, the city which the Emperor Aurelian surrounded with his walls. We will not follow the changes which the city went through any further, but we will ask ourselves how much a visitor, whom we will suppose to be equipped with the most complete historical and topographical knowledge, may still find left of these early stages in the Rome of to-day. Except for a few gaps, he will see the wall of Aurelian almost unchanged. In some places he will be able to find sections of the Servian wall where they have been excavated and brought to light. If he knows enough—more than present-day archaeology does—he may perhaps be able to trace out in the plan of the city the whole course of that wall and the outline of the *Roma Quadrata*. Of the buildings which once occupied this ancient area he will find nothing, or only scanty remains, for they exist no longer. The best information about Rome in

[1] [A footnote on the subject was added by Freud in 1907 to Section F of the last chapter of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **6**, 274–5.]

[2] Based on *The Cambridge Ancient History*, **7** (1928): 'The Founding of Rome' by Hugh Last.

the republican era would only enable him at the most to point out the sites where the temples and public buildings of that period stood. Their place is now taken by ruins, but not by ruins of themselves but of later restorations made after fires or destruction. It is hardly necessary to remark that all these remains of ancient Rome are found dovetailed into the jumble of a great metropolis which has grown up in the last few centuries since the Renaissance. There is certainly not a little that is ancient still buried in the soil of the city or beneath its modern buildings. This is the manner in which the past is preserved in historical sites like Rome.

Now let us, by a flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past—an entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one. This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus would still be rising to their old height on the Palatine and that the castle of S. Angelo would still be carrying on its battlements the beautiful statues which graced it until the siege by the Goths, and so on. But more than this. In the place occupied by the Palazzo Caffarelli would once more stand—without the Palazzo having to be removed—the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; and this not only in its latest shape, as the Romans of the Empire saw it, but also in its earliest one, when it still showed Etruscan forms and was ornamented with terra-cotta antefixes. Where the Coliseum now stands we could at the same time admire Nero's vanished Golden House. On the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of to-day, as it was bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but, on the same site, the original edifice erected by Agrippa; indeed, the same piece of ground would be supporting the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the ancient temple over which it was built. And the observer would perhaps only have to change the direction of his glance or his position in order to call up the one view or the other.

There is clearly no point in spinning our phantasy any further, for it leads to things that are unimaginable and even absurd. If we want to represent historical sequence in spatial terms we can only do it by juxtaposition in space: the same

space cannot have two different contents. Our attempt seems to be an idle game. It has only one justification. It shows us how far we are from mastering the characteristics of mental life by representing them in pictorial terms.

There is one further objection which has to be considered. The question may be raised why we chose precisely the past of a *city* to compare with the past of the mind. The assumption that everything past is preserved holds good even in mental life only on condition that the organ of the mind has remained intact and that its tissues have not been damaged by trauma or inflammation. But destructive influences which can be compared to causes of illness like these are never lacking in the history of a city, even if it has had a less chequered past than Rome, and even if, like London, it has hardly ever suffered from the visitations of an enemy. Demolitions and replacement of buildings occur in the course of the most peaceful development of a city. A city is thus *a priori* unsuited for a comparison of this sort with a mental organism.

We bow to this objection; and, abandoning our attempt to draw a striking contrast, we will turn instead to what is after all a more closely related object of comparison—the body of an animal or a human being. But here, too, we find the same thing. The earlier phases of development are in no sense still preserved; they have been absorbed into the later phases for which they have supplied the material. The embryo cannot be discovered in the adult. The thymus gland of childhood is replaced after puberty by connective tissue, but is no longer present itself; in the marrow-bones of the grown man I can, it is true, trace the outline of the child's bone, but it itself has disappeared, having lengthened and thickened until it has attained its definitive form. The fact remains that only in the mind is such a preservation of all the earlier stages alongside of the final form possible, and that we are not in a position to represent this phenomenon in pictorial terms.

Perhaps we are going too far in this. Perhaps we ought to content ourselves with asserting that what is past in mental life *may* be preserved and is not *necessarily* destroyed. It is always possible that even in the mind some of what is old is effaced or absorbed—whether in the normal course of things or as an exception—to such an extent that it cannot be restored or revivified by any means; or that preservation in general is

dependent on certain favourable conditions. It is possible, but we know nothing about it. We can only hold fast to the fact that it is rather the rule than the exception for the past to be preserved in mental life.

Thus we are perfectly willing to acknowledge that the 'oceanic' feeling exists in many people, and we are inclined to trace it back to an early phase of ego-feeling. The further question then arises, what claim this feeling has to be regarded as the source of religious needs.

To me the claim does not seem compelling. After all, a feeling can only be a source of energy if it is itself the expression of a strong need. The derivation of religious needs from the infant's helplessness and the longing for the father aroused by it seems to me incontrovertible, especially since the feeling is not simply prolonged from childhood days, but is permanently sustained by fear of the superior power of Fate. I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection. Thus the part played by the oceanic feeling, which might seek something like the restoration of limitless narcissism, is ousted from a place in the foreground. The origin of the religious attitude can be traced back in clear outlines as far as the feeling of infantile helplessness. There may be something further behind that, but for the present it is wrapped in obscurity.

I can imagine that the oceanic feeling became connected with religion later on. The 'oneness with the universe' which constitutes its ideational content sounds like a first attempt at a religious consolation, as though it were another way of disclaiming the danger which the ego recognizes as threatening it from the external world. Let me admit once more that it is very difficult for me to work with these almost intangible quantities. Another friend of mine, whose insatiable craving for knowledge has led him to make the most unusual experiments and has ended by giving him encyclopaedic knowledge, has assured me that through the practices of Yoga, by withdrawing from the world, by fixing the attention on bodily functions and by peculiar methods of breathing, one can in fact evoke new sensations and coenaesthesias in oneself, which he regards as regressions to primordial states of mind which have long ago been overlaid. He sees in them a physiological basis, as it were, of much of the wisdom of mysticism. It would not be hard to

find connections here with a number of obscure modifications of mental life, such as trances and ecstasies. But I am moved to exclaim in the words of Schiller's diver:—

> '. . . Es freue sich,
> Wer da atmet im rosigten Licht.' [1]

[1] ['Let him rejoice who breathes up here in the roseate light!' Schiller, 'Der Taucher'.]

## II

In my *Future of an Illusion* [1927*c*] I was concerned much less with the deepest sources of the religious feeling than with what the common man understands by his religion—with the system of doctrines and promises which on the one hand explains to him the riddles of this world with enviable completeness, and, on the other, assures him that a careful Providence will watch over his life and will compensate him in a future existence for any frustrations he suffers here. The common man cannot imagine this Providence otherwise than in the figure of an enormously exalted father. Only such a being can understand the needs of the children of men and be softened by their prayers and placated by the signs of their remorse. The whole thing is so patently infantile, so foreign to reality, that to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life. It is still more humiliating to discover how large a number of people living to-day, who cannot but see that this religion is not tenable, nevertheless try to defend it piece by piece in a series of pitiful rearguard actions. One would like to mix among the ranks of the believers in order to meet these philosophers, who think they can rescue the God of religion by replacing him by an impersonal, shadowy and abstract principle, and to address them with the warning words: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!' And if some of the great men of the past acted in the same way, no appeal can be made to their example: we know why they were obliged to.

Let us return to the common man and to his religion—the only religion which ought to bear that name. The first thing that we think of is the well-known saying of one of our great poets and thinkers concerning the relation of religion to art and science:

> Wer Wissenschaft und Kunst besitzt, hat auch Religion;
> Wer jene beide nicht besitzt, der habe Religion![1]

[1] ['He who possesses science and art also has religion; but he who possesses neither of those two, let him have religion!']—Goethe, *Zahme Xenien* IX (Gedichte aus dem Nachlass).

This saying on the one hand draws an antithesis between religion and the two highest achievements of man, and on the other, asserts that, as regards their value in life, those achievements and religion can represent or replace each other. If we also set out to deprive the common man [who has neither science nor art] of his religion, we shall clearly not have the poet's authority on our side. We will choose a particular path to bring us nearer an appreciation of his words. Life, as we find it, is too hard for us; it brings us too many pains, disappointments and impossible tasks. In order to bear it we cannot dispense with palliative measures. 'We cannot do without auxiliary constructions', as Theodor Fontane tells us.[1] There are perhaps three such measures: powerful deflections, which cause us to make light of our misery; substitutive satisfactions, which diminish it; and intoxicating substances, which make us insensitive to it. Something of the kind is indispensable.[2] Voltaire has deflections in mind when he ends *Candide* with the advice to cultivate one's garden; and scientific activity is a deflection of this kind, too. The substitutive satisfactions, as offered by art, are illusions in contrast with reality, but they are none the less psychically effective, thanks to the role which phantasy has assumed in mental life. The intoxicating substances influence our body and alter its chemistry. It is no simple matter to see where religion has its place in this series. We must look further afield.

The question of the purpose of human life has been raised countless times; it has never yet received a satisfactory answer and perhaps does not admit of one. Some of those who have asked it have added that if it should turn out that life has *no* purpose, it would lose all value for them. But this threat alters nothing. It looks, on the contrary, as though one had a right to dismiss the question, for it seems to derive from the human presumptuousness, many other manifestations of which are already familiar to us. Nobody talks about the purpose of the life of animals, unless, perhaps, it may be supposed to lie in being of service to man. But this view is not tenable either, for there are many animals of which man can make nothing, except to describe, classify and study them; and innumerable

[1] [It has not been possible to trace this quotation.]

[2] In *Die Fromme Helene* Wilhelm Busch has said the same thing on a lower plane: 'Wer Sorgen hat, hat auch Likör.' ['He who has cares has brandy too.']

species of animals have escaped even this use, since they existed and became extinct before man set eyes on them. Once again, only religion can answer the question of the purpose of life. One can hardly be wrong in concluding that the idea of life having a purpose stands and falls with the religious system.

We will therefore turn to the less ambitious question of what men themselves show by their behaviour to be the purpose and intention of their lives. What do they demand of life and wish to achieve in it? The answer to this can hardly be in doubt. They strive after happiness; they want to become happy and to remain so. This endeavour has two sides, a positive and a negative aim. It aims, on the one hand, at an absence of pain and unpleasure, and, on the other, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure. In its narrower sense the word 'happiness' only relates to the last. In conformity with this dichotomy in his aims, man's activity develops in two directions, according as it seeks to realize—in the main, or even exclusively—the one or the other of these aims.

As we see, what decides the purpose of life is simply the programme of the pleasure principle. This principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the start. There can be no doubt about its efficacy, and yet its programme is at loggerheads with the whole world, with the macrocosm as much as with the microcosm. There is no possibility at all of its being carried through; all the regulations of the universe run counter to it. One feels inclined to say that the intention that man should be 'happy' is not included in the plan of 'Creation'. What we call happiness in the strictest sense comes from the (preferably sudden) satisfaction of needs which have been dammed up to a high degree, and it is from its nature only possible as an episodic phenomenon. When any situation that is desired by the pleasure principle is prolonged, it only produces a feeling of mild contentment. We are so made that we can derive intense enjoyment only from a contrast and very little from a state of things.[1] Thus our possibilities of happiness

[1] Goethe, indeed, warns us that 'nothing is harder to bear than a succession of fair days.'

[Alles in der Welt lässt sich ertragen,
Nur nicht eine Reihe von schönen
Tagen.
(Weimar, 1810–12.)]

But this may be an exaggeration.

are already restricted by our constitution. Unhappiness is much less difficult to experience. We are threatened with suffering from three directions: from our own body, which is doomed to decay and dissolution and which cannot even do without pain and anxiety as warning signals; from the external world, which may rage against us with overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations to other men. The suffering which comes from this last source is perhaps more painful to us than any other. We tend to regard it as a kind of gratuitous addition, although it cannot be any less fatefully inevitable than the suffering which comes from elsewhere.

It is no wonder if, under the pressure of these possibilities of suffering, men are accustomed to moderate their claims to happiness—just as the pleasure principle itself, indeed, under the influence of the external world, changed into the more modest reality principle—, if a man thinks himself happy merely to have escaped unhappiness or to have survived his suffering, and if in general the task of avoiding suffering pushes that of obtaining pleasure into the background. Reflection shows that the accomplishment of this task can be attempted along very different paths; and all these paths have been recommended by the various schools of worldly wisdom and put into practice by men. An unrestricted satisfaction of every need presents itself as the most enticing method of conducting one's life, but it means putting enjoyment before caution, and soon brings its own punishment. The other methods, in which avoidance of unpleasure is the main purpose, are differentiated according to the source of unpleasure to which their attention is chiefly turned. Some of these methods are extreme and some moderate; some are one-sided and some attack the problem simultaneously at several points. Against the suffering which may come upon one from human relationships the readiest safeguard is voluntary isolation, keeping oneself aloof from other people. The happiness which can be achieved along this path is, as we see, the happiness of quietness. Against the dreaded external world one can only defend oneself by some kind of turning away from it, if one intends to solve the task by oneself. There is, indeed, another and better path: that of becoming a member of the human community, and, with the help of a technique guided by science, going over to the attack against nature and subjecting her to the human will. Then one is working with all for the good

of all. But the most interesting methods of averting suffering are those which seek to influence our own organism. In the last analysis, all suffering is nothing else than sensation; it only exists in so far as we feel it, and we only feel it in consequence of certain ways in which our organism is regulated.

The crudest, but also the most effective among these methods of influence is the chemical one—intoxication. I do not think that anyone completely understands its mechanism, but it is a fact that there are foreign substances which, when present in the blood or tissues, directly cause us pleasurable sensations; and they also so alter the conditions governing our sensibility that we become incapable of receiving unpleasurable impulses. The two effects not only occur simultaneously, but seem to be intimately bound up with each other. But there must be substances in the chemistry of our own bodies which have similar effects, for we know at least one pathological state, mania, in which a condition similar to intoxication arises without the administration of any intoxicating drug. Besides this, our normal mental life exhibits oscillations between a comparatively easy liberation of pleasure and a comparatively difficult one, parallel with which there goes a diminished or an increased receptivity to unpleasure. It is greatly to be regretted that this toxic side of mental processes has so far escaped scientific examination. The service rendered by intoxicating media in the struggle for happiness and in keeping misery at a distance is so highly prized as a benefit that individuals and peoples alike have given them an established place in the economics of their libido. We owe to such media not merely the immediate yield of pleasure, but also a greatly desired degree of independence from the external world. For one knows that, with the help of this 'drowner of cares' one can at any time withdraw from the pressure of reality and find refuge in a world of one's own with better conditions of sensibility. As is well known, it is precisely this property of intoxicants which also determines their danger and their injuriousness. They are responsible, in certain circumstances, for the useless waste of a large quota of energy which might have been employed for the improvement of the human lot.

The complicated structure of our mental apparatus admits, however, of a whole number of other influences. Just as a satisfaction of instinct spells happiness for us, so severe suffering

is caused us if the external world lets us starve, if it refuses to sate our needs. One may therefore hope to be freed from a part of one's sufferings by influencing the instinctual impulses. This type of defence against suffering is no longer brought to bear on the sensory apparatus; it seeks to master the internal sources of our needs. The extreme form of this is brought about by killing off the instincts, as is prescribed by the worldly wisdom of the East and practised by Yoga. If it succeeds, then the subject has, it is true, given up all other activities as well—he has sacrificed his life; and, by another path, he has once more only achieved the happiness of quietness. We follow the same path when our aims are less extreme and we merely attempt to *control* our instinctual life. In that case, the controlling elements are the higher psychical agencies, which have subjected themselves to the reality principle. Here the aim of satisfaction is not by any means relinquished; but a certain amount of protection against suffering is secured, in that non-satisfaction is not so painfully felt in the case of instincts kept in dependence as in the case of uninhibited ones. As against this, there is an undeniable diminution in the potentialities of enjoyment. The feeling of happiness derived from the satisfaction of a wild instinctual impulse untamed by the ego is incomparably more intense than that derived from sating an instinct that has been tamed. The irresistibility of perverse instincts, and perhaps the attraction in general of forbidden things, finds an economic explanation here.

Another technique for fending off suffering is the employment of the displacements of libido which our mental apparatus permits of and through which its function gains so much in flexibility. The task here is that of shifting the instinctual aims in such a way that they cannot come up against frustration from the external world. In this, sublimation of the instincts lends its assistance. One gains the most if one can sufficiently heighten the yield of pleasure from the sources of psychical and intellectual work. When that is so, fate can do little against one. A satisfaction of this kind, such as an artist's joy in creating, in giving his phantasies body, or a scientist's in solving problems or discovering truths, has a special quality which we shall certainly one day be able to characterize in metapsychological terms. At present we can only say figuratively that such satisfactions seem 'finer and higher'. But their intensity is mild as compared with that derived from the sating of crude and primary

instinctual impulses; it does not convulse our physical being. And the weak point of this method is that it is not applicable generally: it is accessible to only a few people. It presupposes the possession of special dispositions and gifts which are far from being common to any practical degree. And even to the few who do possess them, this method cannot give complete protection from suffering. It creates no impenetrable armour against the arrows of fortune, and it habitually fails when the source of suffering is a person's own body.[1]

While this procedure already clearly shows an intention of making oneself independent of the external world by seeking satisfaction in internal, psychical processes, the next procedure brings out those features yet more strongly. In it, the connection with reality is still further loosened; satisfaction is obtained from illusions, which are recognized as such without the discrepancy between them and reality being allowed to interfere with enjoyment. The region from which these illusions arise is the life of the imagination; at the time when the development of the sense of reality took place, this region was expressly exempted from the demands of reality-testing and was set apart for the purpose of fulfilling wishes which were difficult to carry out. At the head of these satisfactions through phantasy stands the enjoyment of works of art—an enjoyment which, by the

[1] When there is no special disposition in a person which imperatively prescribes what direction his interests in life shall take, the ordinary professional work that is open to everyone can play the part assigned to it by Voltaire's wise advice [p. 75 above]. It is not possible, within the limits of a short survey, to discuss adequately the significance of work for the economics of the libido. No other technique for the conduct of life attaches the individual so firmly to reality as laying emphasis on work; for his work at least gives him a secure place in a portion of reality, in the human community. The possibility it offers of displacing a large amount of libidinal components, whether narcissistic, aggressive or even erotic, on to professional work and on to the human relations connected with it lends it a value by no means second to what it enjoys as something indispensable to the preservation and justification of existence in society. Professional activity is a source of special satisfaction if it is a freely chosen one—if, that is to say, by means of sublimation, it makes possible the use of existing inclinations, of persisting or constitutionally reinforced instinctual impulses. And yet, as a path to happiness, work is not highly prized by men. They do not strive after it as they do after other possibilities of satisfaction. The great majority of people only work under the stress of necessity, and this natural human aversion to work raises most difficult social problems.

agency of the artist, is made accessible even to those who are not themselves creative.[1] People who are receptive to the influence of art cannot set too high a value on it as a source of pleasure and consolation in life. Nevertheless the mild narcosis induced in us by art can do no more than bring about a transient withdrawal from the pressure of vital needs, and it is not strong enough to make us forget real misery.

Another procedure operates more energetically and more thoroughly. It regards reality as the sole enemy and as the source of all suffering, with which it is impossible to live, so that one must break off all relations with it if one is to be in any way happy. The hermit turns his back on the world and will have no truck with it. But one can do more than that; one can try to re-create the world, to build up in its stead another world in which its most unbearable features are eliminated and replaced by others that are in conformity with one's own wishes. But whoever, in desperate defiance, sets out upon this path to happiness will as a rule attain nothing. Reality is too strong for him. He becomes a madman, who for the most part finds no one to help him in carrying through his delusion. It is asserted, however, that each one of us behaves in some one respect like a paranoic, corrects some aspect of the world which is unbearable to him by the construction of a wish and introduces this delusion into reality. A special importance attaches to the case in which this attempt to procure a certainty of happiness and a protection against suffering through a delusional remoulding of reality is made by a considerable number of people in common. The religions of mankind must be classed among the mass-delusions of this kind. No one, needless to say, who shares a delusion ever recognizes it as such.

I do not think that I have made a complete enumeration of the methods by which men strive to gain happiness and keep suffering away and I know, too, that the material might have been differently arranged. One procedure I have not yet mentioned—not because I have forgotten it but because it will concern us later in another connection. And how could one possibly forget, of all others, this technique in the art of living? It is conspicuous for a most remarkable combination of characteristic features. It, too, aims of course at making the subject

[1] Cf. 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911*b*), and Lecture XXIII of my *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17).

independent of Fate (as it is best to call it), and to that end it locates satisfaction in internal mental processes, making use, in so doing, of the displaceability of the libido of which we have already spoken [p. 79]. But it does not turn away from the external world; on the contrary, it clings to the objects belonging to that world and obtains happiness from an emotional relationship to them. Nor is it content to aim at an avoidance of unpleasure—a goal, as we might call it, of weary resignation; it passes this by without heed and holds fast to the original, passionate striving for a positive fulfilment of happiness. And perhaps it does in fact come nearer to this goal than any other method. I am, of course, speaking of the way of life which makes love the centre of everything, which looks for all satisfaction in loving and being loved. A psychical attitude of this sort comes naturally enough to all of us; one of the forms in which love manifests itself—sexual love—has given us our most intense experience of an overwhelming sensation of pleasure and has thus furnished us with a pattern for our search for happiness. What is more natural than that we should persist in looking for happiness along the path on which we first encountered it? The weak side of this technique of living is easy to see; otherwise no human being would have thought of abandoning this path to happiness for any other. It is that we are never so defenceless against suffering as when we love, never so helplessly unhappy as when we have lost our loved object or its love. But this does not dispose of the technique of living based on the value of love as a means to happiness. There is much more to be said about it. [See below, p. 101.]

We may go on from here to consider the interesting case in which happiness in life is predominantly sought in the enjoyment of beauty, wherever beauty presents itself to our senses and our judgement—the beauty of human forms and gestures, of natural objects and landscapes and of artistic and even scientific creations. This aesthetic attitude to the goal of life offers little protection against the threat of suffering, but it can compensate for a great deal. The enjoyment of beauty has a peculiar, mildly intoxicating quality of feeling. Beauty has no obvious use; nor is there any clear cultural necessity for it. Yet civilization could not do without it. The science of aesthetics investigates the conditions under which things are felt as beautiful, but it has been unable to give any explanation of the nature and origin of

beauty, and, as usually happens, lack of success is concealed beneath a flood of resounding and empty words. Psychoanalysis, unfortunately, has scarcely anything to say about beauty either. All that seems certain is its derivation from the field of sexual feeling. The love of beauty seems a perfect example of an impulse inhibited in its aim. 'Beauty' and 'attraction'[1] are originally attributes of the sexual object. It is worth remarking that the genitals themselves, the sight of which is always exciting, are nevertheless hardly ever judged to be beautiful; the quality of beauty seems, instead, to attach to certain secondary sexual characters.

In spite of the incompleteness [of my enumeration (p. 81)], I will venture on a few remarks as a conclusion to our enquiry. The programme of becoming happy, which the pleasure principle imposes on us [p. 76], cannot be fulfilled; yet we must not—indeed, we cannot—give up our efforts to bring it nearer to fulfilment by some means or other. Very different paths may be taken in that direction, and we may give priority either to the positive aspect of the aim, that of gaining pleasure, or to its negative one, that of avoiding unpleasure. By none of these paths can we attain all that we desire. Happiness, in the reduced sense in which we recognize it as possible, is a problem of the economics of the individual's libido. There is no golden rule which applies to everyone: every man must find out for himself in what particular fashion he can be saved.[2] All kinds of different factors will operate to direct his choice. It is a question of how much real satisfaction he can expect to get from the external world, how far he is led to make himself independent of it, and, finally, how much strength he feels he has for altering the world to suit his wishes. In this, his psychical constitution will play a decisive part, irrespectively of the external circumstances. The man who is predominantly erotic will give first preference to his emotional relationships to other people; the narcissistic man, who inclines to be self-sufficient, will seek his

[1] [The German '*Reiz*' means 'stimulus' as well as 'charm' or 'attraction'. Freud had argued on the same lines in the first edition of his *Three Essays* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 209, as well as in a footnote added to that work in 1915, ibid., 156.]

[2] [The allusion is to a saying attributed to Frederick the Great: 'in my State every man can be saved after his own fashion.' Freud had quoted this a short time before, in *Lay Analysis* (1926*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 236.]

main satisfactions in his internal mental processes; the man of action will never give up the external world on which he can try out his strength.[1] As regards the second of these types, the nature of his talents and the amount of instinctual sublimation open to him will decide where he shall locate his interests. Any choice that is pushed to an extreme will be penalized by exposing the individual to the dangers which arise if a technique of living that has been chosen as an exclusive one should prove inadequate. Just as a cautious business-man avoids tying up all his capital in one concern, so, perhaps, worldly wisdom will advise us not to look for the whole of our satisfaction from a single aspiration. Its success is never certain, for that depends on the convergence of many factors, perhaps on none more than on the capacity of the psychical constitution to adapt its function to the environment and then to exploit that environment for a yield of pleasure. A person who is born with a specially unfavourable instinctual constitution, and who has not properly undergone the transformation and rearrangement of his libidinal components which is indispensable for later achievements, will find it hard to obtain happiness from his external situation, especially if he is faced with tasks of some difficulty. As a last technique of living, which will at least bring him substitutive satisfactions, he is offered that of a flight into neurotic illness—a flight which he usually accomplishes when he is still young. The man who sees his pursuit of happiness come to nothing in later years can still find consolation in the yield of pleasure of chronic intoxication; or he can embark on the desperate attempt at rebellion seen in a psychosis.[2]

Religion restricts this play of choice and adaptation, since it imposes equally on everyone its own path to the acquisition of happiness and protection from suffering. Its technique consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner—which presupposes an intimidation of the intelligence. At this price, by forcibly fixing

[1] [Freud further develops his ideas on these different types in his paper on 'Libidinal Types' (1931*a*).]

[2] [*Footnote added* 1931:] I feel impelled to point out one at least of the gaps that have been left in the account given above. No discussion of the possibilities of human happiness should omit to take into consideration the relation between narcissism and object libido. We require to know what being essentially self-dependent signifies for the economics of the libido.

them in a state of psychical infantilism and by drawing them into a mass-delusion, religion succeeds in sparing many people an individual neurosis. But hardly anything more. There are, as we have said, many paths which *may* lead to such happiness as is attainable by men, but there is none which does so for certain. Even religion cannot keep its promise. If the believer finally sees himself obliged to speak of God's 'inscrutable decrees', he is admitting that all that is left to him as a last possible consolation and source of pleasure in his suffering is an unconditional submission. And if he is prepared for that, he could probably have spared himself the *détour* he has made.

## III

Our enquiry concerning happiness has not so far taught us much that is not already common knowledge. And even if we proceed from it to the problem of why it is so hard for men to be happy, there seems no greater prospect of learning anything new. We have given the answer already [p. 77] by pointing to the three sources from which our suffering comes: the superior power of nature, the feebleness of our own bodies and the inadequacy of the regulations which adjust the mutual relationships of human beings in the family, the state and society. In regard to the first two sources, our judgement cannot hesitate long. It forces us to acknowledge those sources of suffering and to submit to the inevitable. We shall never completely master nature; and our bodily organism, itself a part of that nature, will always remain a transient structure with a limited capacity for adaptation and achievement. This recognition does not have a paralysing effect. On the contrary, it points the direction for our activity. If we cannot remove all suffering, we can remove some, and we can mitigate some: the experience of many thousands of years has convinced us of that. As regards the third source, the social source of suffering, our attitude is a different one. We do not admit it at all; we cannot see why the regulations made by ourselves should not, on the contrary, be a protection and a benefit for every one of us. And yet, when we consider how unsuccessful we have been in precisely this field of prevention of suffering, a suspicion dawns on us that here, too, a piece of unconquerable nature may lie behind—this time a piece of our own psychical constitution.

When we start considering this possibility, we come upon a contention which is so astonishing that we must dwell upon it. This contention holds that what we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and that we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions. I call this contention astonishing because, in whatever way we may define the concept of civilization, it is a certain fact that all the things with which we seek to protect ourselves against the threats that emanate from the sources of suffering are part of that very civilization.

How has it happened that so many people have come to take up this strange attitude of hostility to civilization?[1] I believe that the basis of it was a deep and long-standing dissatisfaction with the then existing state of civilization and that on that basis a condemnation of it was built up, occasioned by certain specific historical events. I think I know what the last and the last but one of those occasions were. I am not learned enough to trace the chain of them far back enough in the history of the human species; but a factor of this kind hostile to civilization must already have been at work in the victory of Christendom over the heathen religions. For it was very closely related to the low estimation put upon earthly life by the Christian doctrine. The last but one of these occasions was when the progress of voyages of discovery led to contact with primitive peoples and races. In consequence of insufficient observation and a mistaken view of their manners and customs, they appeared to Europeans to be leading a simple, happy life with few wants, a life such as was unattainable by their visitors with their superior civilization. Later experience has corrected some of those judgements. In many cases the observers had wrongly attributed to the absence of complicated cultural demands what was in fact due to the bounty of nature and the ease with which the major human needs were satisfied. The last occasion is especially familiar to us. It arose when people came to know about the mechanism of the neuroses, which threaten to undermine the modicum of happiness enjoyed by civilized men. It was discovered that a person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the amount of frustration which society imposes on him in the service of its cultural ideals, and it was inferred from this that the abolition or reduction of those demands would result in a return to possibilities of happiness.

There is also an added factor of disappointment. During the last few generations mankind has made an extraordinary advance in the natural sciences and in their technical application and has established his control over nature in a way never before imagined. The single steps of this advance are common knowledge and it is unnecessary to enumerate them. Men are proud of those achievements, and have a right to be. But they seem to have observed that this newly-won power over space

[1] [Freud had discussed this question at considerable length two years earlier, in the opening chapters of *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*).]

and time, this subjugation of the forces of nature, which is the fulfilment of a longing that goes back thousands of years, has not increased the amount of pleasurable satisfaction which they may expect from life and has not made them feel happier. From the recognition of this fact we ought to be content to conclude that power over nature is not the *only* precondition of human happiness, just as it is not the *only* goal of cultural endeavour; we ought not to infer from it that technical progress is without value for the economics of our happiness. One would like to ask: is there, then, no positive gain in pleasure, no unequivocal increase in my feeling of happiness, if I can, as often as I please, hear the voice of a child of mine who is living hundreds of miles away or if I can learn in the shortest possible time after a friend has reached his destination that he has come through the long and difficult voyage unharmed? Does it mean nothing that medicine has succeeded in enormously reducing infant mortality and the danger of infection for women in childbirth, and, indeed, in considerably lengthening the average life of a civilized man? And there is a long list that might be added to benefits of this kind which we owe to the much-despised era of scientific and technical advances. But here the voice of pessimistic criticism makes itself heard and warns us that most of these satisfactions follow the model of the 'cheap enjoyment' extolled in the anecdote—the enjoyment obtained by putting a bare leg from under the bedclothes on a cold winter night and drawing it in again. If there had been no railway to conquer distances, my child would never have left his native town and I should need no telephone to hear his voice; if travelling across the ocean by ship had not been introduced, my friend would not have embarked on his sea-voyage and I should not need a cable to relieve my anxiety about him. What is the use of reducing infantile mortality when it is precisely that reduction which imposes the greatest restraint on us in the begetting of children, so that, taken all round, we nevertheless rear no more children than in the days before the reign of hygiene, while at the same time we have created difficult conditions for our sexual life in marriage, and have probably worked against the beneficial effects of natural selection? And, finally, what good to us is a long life if it is difficult and barren of joys, and if it is so full of misery that we can only welcome death as a deliverer?

It seems certain that we do not feel comfortable in our present-day civilization, but it is very difficult to form an opinion whether and in what degree men of an earlier age felt happier and what part their cultural conditions played in the matter. We shall always tend to consider people's distress objectively—that is, to place ourselves, with our own wants and sensibilities, in *their* conditions, and then to examine what occasions we should find in them for experiencing happiness or unhappiness. This method of looking at things, which seems objective because it ignores the variations in subjective sensibility, is, of course, the most subjective possible, since it puts one's own mental states in the place of any others, unknown though they may be. Happiness, however, is something essentially subjective. No matter how much we may shrink with horror from certain situations—of a galley-slave in antiquity, of a peasant during the Thirty Years' War, of a victim of the Holy Inquisition, of a Jew awaiting a pogrom—it is nevertheless impossible for us to feel our way into such people—to divine the changes which original obtuseness of mind, a gradual stupefying process, the cessation of expectations, and cruder or more refined methods of narcotization have produced upon their receptivity to sensations of pleasure and unpleasure. Moreover, in the case of the most extreme possibility of suffering, special mental protective devices are brought into operation. It seems to me unprofitable to pursue this aspect of the problem any further.

It is time for us to turn our attention to the nature of this civilization on whose value as a means to happiness doubts have been thrown. We shall not look for a formula in which to express that nature in a few words, until we have learned something by examining it. We shall therefore content ourselves with saying once more that the word 'civilization'[1] describes the whole sum of the achievements and the regulations which distinguish our lives from those of our animal ancestors and which serve two purposes—namely to protect men against nature and to adjust their mutual relations.[2] In order to learn more, we will bring together the various features of civilization individually, as they are exhibited in human communities. In doing so, we shall have no hesitation in letting ourselves be

[1] ['*Kultur*.' For the translation of this word see the Editor's Note to *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 4 above.]

[2] See *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 6 above.

guided by linguistic usage or, as it is also called, linguistic feeling, in the conviction that we shall thus be doing justice to inner discernments which still defy expression in abstract terms.

The first stage is easy. We recognize as cultural all activities and resources which are useful to men for making the earth serviceable to them, for protecting them against the violence of the forces of nature, and so on. As regards this side of civilization, there can be scarcely any doubt. If we go back far enough, we find that the first acts of civilization were the use of tools, the gaining of control over fire and the construction of dwellings. Among these, the control over fire stands out as a quite extraordinary and unexampled achievement,[1] while the others opened up paths which man has followed ever since, and the stimulus to which is easily guessed. With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning. Motor power places gigantic forces at his disposal, which, like his muscles, he can employ in any direction; thanks to ships and aircraft neither water nor air can hinder his movements; by means of spectacles he corrects defects in the lens of his own eye; by means of the

[1] Psycho-analytic material, incomplete as it is and not susceptible to clear interpretation, nevertheless admits of a conjecture—a fantastic-sounding one—about the origin of this human feat. It is as though primal man had the habit, when he came in contact with fire, of satisfying an infantile desire connected with it, by putting it out with a stream of his urine. The legends that we possess leave no doubt about the originally phallic view taken of tongues of flame as they shoot upwards. Putting out fire by micturating—a theme to which modern giants, Gulliver in Lilliput and Rabelais' Gargantua, still hark back—was therefore a kind of sexual act with a male, an enjoyment of sexual potency in a homosexual competition. The first person to renounce this desire and spare the fire was able to carry it off with him and subdue it to his own use. By damping down the fire of his own sexual excitation, he had tamed the natural force of fire. This great cultural conquest was thus the reward for his renunciation of instinct. Further, it is as though woman had been appointed guardian of the fire which was held captive on the domestic hearth, because her anatomy made it impossible for her to yield to the temptation of this desire. It is remarkable, too, how regularly analytic experience testifies to the connection between ambition, fire and urethral erotism.—[Freud had pointed to the connection between urination and fire as early as in the 'Dora' case history (1905*e* [1901]). The connection with ambition came rather later. A full list of references will be found in the Editor's Note to the later paper on the subject, 'The Acquisition and Control of Fire' (1932*a*).]

telescope he sees into the far distance; and by means of the microscope he overcomes the limits of visibility set by the structure of his retina. In the photographic camera he has created an instrument which retains the fleeting visual impressions, just as a gramophone disc retains the equally fleeting auditory ones; both are at bottom materializations of the power he possesses of recollection, his memory. With the help of the telephone he can hear at distances which would be respected as unattainable even in a fairy tale. Writing was in its origin the voice of an absent person; and the dwelling-house was a substitute for the mother's womb, the first lodging, for which in all likelihood man still longs, and in which he was safe and felt at ease.

These things that, by his science and technology, man has brought about on this earth, on which he first appeared as a feeble animal organism and on which each individual of his species must once more make its entry ('oh inch of nature!'[1]) as a helpless suckling—these things do not only sound like a fairy tale, they are an actual fulfilment of every—or of almost every—fairy-tale wish. All these assets he may lay claim to as his cultural acquisition. Long ago he formed an ideal conception of omnipotence and omniscience which he embodied in his gods. To these gods he attributed everything that seemed unattainable to his wishes, or that was forbidden to him. One may say, therefore, that these gods were cultural ideals. To-day he has come very close to the attainment of this ideal, he has almost become a god himself. Only, it is true, in the fashion in which ideals are usually attained according to the general judgement of humanity. Not completely; in some respects not at all, in others only half way. Man has, as it were, become a kind of

[1] [In English in the original. This very Shakespearean phrase is not in fact to be found in the canon of Shakespeare. The words 'Poore inch of Nature' occur, however, in a novel by George Wilkins, *The Painfull Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre*, where they are addressed by Pericles to his infant daughter. This work was first printed in 1608, just after the publication of Shakespeare's play, in which Wilkins has been thought to have had a hand. Freud's unexpected acquaintance with the phrase is explained by its appearance in a discussion of the origins of *Pericles* in Georg Brandes's well-known book on Shakespeare, a copy of the German translation of which had a place in Freud's library (Brandes, 1896). He is known to have greatly admired the Danish critic (cf. Jones, 1957, 120), and the same book is quoted in his paper on the three caskets (1913*f*).]

prosthetic[1] God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on to him and they still give him much trouble at times. Nevertheless, he is entitled to console himself with the thought that this development will not come to an end precisely with the year 1930 A.D. Future ages will bring with them new and probably unimaginably great advances in this field of civilization and will increase man's likeness to God still more. But in the interests of our investigations, we will not forget that present-day man does not feel happy in his Godlike character.

We recognize, then, that countries have attained a high level of civilization if we find that in them everything which can assist in the exploitation of the earth by man and in his protection against the forces of nature—everything, in short, which is of use to him—is attended to and effectively carried out. In such countries rivers which threaten to flood the land are regulated in their flow, and their water is directed through canals to places where there is a shortage of it. The soil is carefully cultivated and planted with the vegetation which it is suited to support; and the mineral wealth below ground is assiduously brought to the surface and fashioned into the required implements and utensils. The means of communication are ample, rapid and reliable. Wild and dangerous animals have been exterminated, and the breeding of domesticated animals flourishes. But we demand other things from civilization besides these, and it is a noticeable fact that we hope to find them realized in these same countries. As though we were seeking to repudiate the first demand we made, we welcome it as a sign of civilization as well if we see people directing their care too to what has no practical value whatever, to what is useless—if, for instance, the green spaces necessary in a town as playgrounds and as reservoirs of fresh air are also laid out with flower-beds, or if the windows of the houses are decorated with pots of flowers. We soon observe that this useless thing which we expect civilization to value is beauty. We require civilized man to reverence beauty wherever he sees it in nature and to create it in the objects of his handiwork so far as he is able. But this is far from exhausting our demands on civilization. We expect

[1] [A prosthesis is the medical term for an artificial adjunct to the body, to make up for some missing or inadequate part: e.g. false teeth or a false leg.]

besides to see the signs of cleanliness and order. We do not think highly of the cultural level of an English country town in Shakespeare's time when we read that there was a big dung-heap in front of his father's house in Stratford; we are indignant and call it 'barbarous' (which is the opposite of civilized) when we find the paths in the Wiener Wald[1] littered with paper. Dirtiness of any kind seems to us incompatible with civilization. We extend our demand for cleanliness to the human body too. We are astonished to learn of the objectionable smell which emanated from the *Roi Soleil*;[2] and we shake our heads on the Isola Bella[3] when we are shown the tiny wash-basin in which Napoleon made his morning toilet. Indeed, we are not surprised by the idea of setting up the use of soap as an actual yardstick of civilization. The same is true of order. It, like cleanliness, applies solely to the works of man. But whereas cleanliness is not to be expected in nature, order, on the contrary, has been imitated from her. Man's observation of the great astronomical regularities not only furnished him with a model for introducing order into his life, but gave him the first points of departure for doing so. Order is a kind of compulsion to repeat which, when a regulation has been laid down once and for all, decides when, where and how a thing shall be done, so that in every similar circumstance one is spared hesitation and indecision. The benefits of order are incontestable. It enables men to use space and time to the best advantage, while conserving their psychical forces. We should have a right to expect that order would have taken its place in human activities from the start and without difficulty; and we may well wonder that this has not happened—that, on the contrary, human beings exhibit an inborn tendency to carelessness, irregularity and unreliability in their work, and that a laborious training is needed before they learn to follow the example of their celestial models.

Beauty, cleanliness and order obviously occupy a special position among the requirements of civilization. No one will maintain that they are as important for life as control over the forces of nature or as some other factors with which we shall

[1] [The wooded hills on the outskirts of Vienna.]

[2] [Louis XIV of France.]

[3] [The well-known island in Lake Maggiore, visited by Napoleon a few days before the battle of Marengo.]

become acquainted. And yet no one would care to put them in the background as trivialities. That civilization is not exclusively taken up with what is useful is already shown by the example of beauty, which we decline to omit from among the interests of civilization. The usefulness of order is quite evident. With regard to cleanliness, we must bear in mind that it is demanded of us by hygiene as well, and we may suspect that even before the days of scientific prophylaxis the connection between the two was not altogether strange to man. Yet utility does not entirely explain these efforts; something else must be at work besides.

No feature, however, seems better to characterize civilization than its esteem and encouragement of man's higher mental activities—his intellectual, scientific and artistic achievements—and the leading role that it assigns to ideas in human life. Foremost among those ideas are the religious systems, on whose complicated structure I have endeavoured to throw light elsewhere.[1] Next come the speculations of philosophy; and finally what might be called man's 'ideals'—his ideas of a possible perfection of individuals, or of peoples or of the whole of humanity, and the demands he sets up on the basis of such ideas. The fact that these creations of his are not independent of one another, but are on the contrary closely interwoven, increases the difficulty not only of describing them but of tracing their psychological derivation. If we assume quite generally that the motive force of all human activities is a striving towards the two confluent goals of utility and a yield of pleasure, we must suppose that this is also true of the manifestations of civilization which we have been discussing here, although this is easily visible only in scientific and aesthetic activities. But it cannot be doubted that the other activities, too, correspond to strong needs in men—perhaps to needs which are only developed in a minority. Nor must we allow ourselves to be misled by judgements of value concerning any particular religion, or philosophic system, or ideal. Whether we think to find in them the highest achievements of the human spirit, or whether we deplore them as aberrations, we cannot but recognize that where they are present, and, in especial, where they are dominant, a high level of civilization is implied.

The last, but certainly not the least important, of the characteristic features of civilization remains to be assessed: the

[1] [Cf. *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*).]

manner in which the relationships of men to one another, their social relationships, are regulated—relationships which affect a person as a neighbour, as a source of help, as another person's sexual object, as a member of a family and of a State. Here it is especially difficult to keep clear of particular ideal demands and to see what is civilized in general. Perhaps we may begin by explaining that the element of civilization enters on the scene with the first attempt to regulate these social relationships. If the attempt were not made, the relationships would be subject to the arbitrary will of the individual: that is to say, the physically stronger man would decide them in the sense of his own interests and instinctual impulses. Nothing would be changed in this if this stronger man should in his turn meet someone even stronger than he. Human life in common is only made possible when a majority comes together which is stronger than any separate individual and which remains united against all separate individuals. The power of this community is then set up as 'right' in opposition to the power of the individual, which is condemned as 'brute force'. This replacement of the power of the individual by the power of a community constitutes the decisive step of civilization. The essence of it lies in the fact that the members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction, whereas the individual knew no such restrictions. The first requisite of civilization, therefore, is that of justice—that is, the assurance that a law once made will not be broken in favour of an individual. This implies nothing as to the ethical value of such a law. The further course of cultural development seems to tend towards making the law no longer an expression of the will of a small community—a caste or a stratum of the population or a racial group—which, in its turn, behaves like a violent individual towards other, and perhaps more numerous, collections of people. The final outcome should be a rule of law to which all—except those who are not capable of entering a community—have contributed by a sacrifice of their instincts, and which leaves no one—again with the same exception—at the mercy of brute force.

The liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization. It was greatest before there was any civilization, though then, it is true, it had for the most part no value, since the individual was scarcely in a position to defend it. The development of civilization imposes restrictions on it, and justice demands that no one

shall escape those restrictions. What makes itself felt in a human community as a desire for freedom may be their revolt against some existing injustice, and so may prove favourable to a further development of civilization; it may remain compatible with civilization. But it may also spring from the remains of their original personality, which is still untamed by civilization and may thus become the basis in them of hostility to civilization. The urge for freedom, therefore, is directed against particular forms and demands of civilization or against civilization altogether. It does not seem as though any influence could induce a man to change his nature into a termite's. No doubt he will always defend his claim to individual liberty against the will of the group. A good part of the struggles of mankind centre round the single task of finding an expedient accommodation—one, that is, that will bring happiness—between this claim of the individual and the cultural claims of the group; and one of the problems that touches the fate of humanity is whether such an accommodation can be reached by means of some particular form of civilization or whether this conflict is irreconcilable.

By allowing common feeling to be our guide in deciding what features of human life are to be regarded as civilized, we have obtained a clear impression of the general picture of civilization; but it is true that so far we have discovered nothing that is not universally known. At the same time we have been careful not to fall in with the prejudice that civilization is synonymous with perfecting, that it is the road to perfection pre-ordained for men. But now a point of view presents itself which may lead in a different direction. The development of civilization appears to us as a peculiar process which mankind undergoes, and in which several things strike us as familiar. We may characterize this process with reference to the changes which it brings about in the familiar instinctual dispositions of human beings, to satisfy which is, after all, the economic task of our lives. A few of these instincts are used up in such a manner that something appears in their place which, in an individual, we describe as a character-trait. The most remarkable example of such a process is found in the anal erotism of young human beings. Their original interest in the excretory function, its organs and products, is changed in the course of their growth into a group of traits which are familiar to us as parsimony, a sense of order and

cleanliness—qualities which, though valuable and welcome in themselves, may be intensified till they become markedly dominant and produce what is called the anal character. How this happens we do not know, but there is no doubt about the correctness of the finding.[1] Now we have seen that order and cleanliness are important requirements of civilization, although their vital necessity is not very apparent, any more than their suitability as sources of enjoyment. At this point we cannot fail to be struck by the similarity between the process of civilization and the libidinal development of the individual. Other instincts [besides anal erotism] are induced to displace the conditions for their satisfaction, to lead them into other paths. In most cases this process coincides with that of the *sublimation* (of instinctual aims) with which we are familiar, but in some it can be differentiated from it. Sublimation of instinct is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life. If one were to yield to a first impression, one would say that sublimation is a vicissitude which has been forced upon the instincts entirely by civilization. But it would be wiser to reflect upon this a little longer. In the third place,[2] finally, and this seems the most important of all, it is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means?) of powerful instincts. This 'cultural frustration' dominates the large field of social relationships between human beings. As we already know, it is the cause of the hostility against which all civilizations have to struggle. It will also make severe demands on our scientific work, and we shall have much to explain here. It is not easy to understand how it can become possible to deprive an instinct of satisfaction. Nor is doing so without danger. If the loss is not compensated for economically, one can be certain that serious disorders will ensue.

But if we want to know what value can be attributed to our view that the development of civilization is a special process,

[1] Cf. my 'Character and Anal Erotism' (1908*b*), and numerous further contributions, by Ernest Jones [1918] and others.

[2] [Freud had already mentioned two other factors playing a part in the 'process' of civilization: character-formation and sublimation.]

comparable to the normal maturation of the individual, we must clearly attack another problem. We must ask ourselves to what influences the development of civilization owes its origin, how it arose, and by what its course has been determined.[1]

[1] [Freud returns to the subject of civilization as a 'process' below, on p. 122 and again on p. 139 ff. He mentions it once more in his open letter to Einstein, *Why War?* (1933*b*).]

## IV

THE task seems an immense one, and it is natural to feel diffidence in the face of it. But here are such conjectures as I have been able to make.

After primal man had discovered that it lay in his own hands, literally, to improve his lot on earth by working, it cannot have been a matter of indifference to him whether another man worked with or against him. The other man acquired the value for him of a fellow-worker, with whom it was useful to live together. Even earlier, in his ape-like prehistory, man had adopted the habit of forming families, and the members of his family were probably his first helpers. One may suppose that the founding of families was connected with the fact that a moment came when the need for genital satisfaction no longer made its appearance like a guest who drops in suddenly, and, after his departure, is heard of no more for a long time, but instead took up its quarters as a permanent lodger. When this happened, the male acquired a motive for keeping the female, or, speaking more generally, his sexual objects, near him; while the female, who did not want to be separated from her helpless young, was obliged, in their interests, to remain with the stronger male.[1] In this primitive family one essential feature of

[1] The organic periodicity of the sexual process has persisted, it is true, but its effect on psychical sexual excitation has rather been reversed. This change seems most likely to be connected with the diminution of the olfactory stimuli by means of which the menstrual process produced an effect on the male psyche. Their role was taken over by visual excitations, which, in contrast to the intermittent olfactory stimuli, were able to maintain a permanent effect. The taboo on menstruation is derived from this 'organic repression', as a defence against a phase of development that has been surmounted. All other motives are probably of a secondary nature. (Cf. C. D. Daly, 1927.) This process is repeated on another level when the gods of a superseded period of civilization turn into demons. The diminution of the olfactory stimuli seems itself to be a consequence of man's raising himself from the ground, of his assumption of an upright gait; this made his genitals, which were previously concealed, visible and in need of protection, and so provoked feelings of shame in him.

The fateful process of civilization would thus have set in with man's adoption of an erect posture. From that point the chain of events would have proceeded through the devaluation of olfactory stimuli and the

civilization is still lacking. The arbitrary will of its head, the father, was unrestricted. In *Totem and Taboo* [1912–13][1] I have tried to show how the way led from this family to the succeeding stage of communal life in the form of bands of brothers. In overpowering their father, the sons had made the discovery that a combination can be stronger than a single individual. The totemic culture is based on the restrictions which the sons had

isolation of the menstrual period to the time when visual stimuli were paramount and the genitals became visible, and thence to the continuity of sexual excitation, the founding of the family and so to the threshold of human civilization. This is only a theoretical speculation, but it is important enough to deserve careful checking with reference to the conditions of life which obtain among animals closely related to man.

A social factor is also unmistakably present in the cultural trend towards cleanliness, which has received *ex post facto* justification in hygienic considerations but which manifested itself before their discovery. The incitement to cleanliness originates in an urge to get rid of the excreta, which have become disagreeable to the sense perceptions. We know that in the nursery things are different. The excreta arouse no disgust in children. They seem valuable to them as being a part of their own body which has come away from it. Here upbringing insists with special energy on hastening the course of development which lies ahead, and which should make the excreta worthless, disgusting, abhorrent and abominable. Such a reversal of values would scarcely be possible if the substances that are expelled from the body were not doomed by their strong smells to share the fate which overtook olfactory stimuli after man adopted the erect posture. Anal erotism, therefore, succumbs in the first instance to the 'organic repression' which paved the way to civilization. The existence of the social factor which is responsible for the further transformation of anal erotism is attested by the circumstance that, in spite of all man's developmental advances, he scarcely finds the smell of *his own* excreta repulsive, but only that of other people's. Thus a person who is not clean—who does not hide his excreta—is offending other people; he is showing no consideration for them. And this is confirmed by our strongest and commonest terms of abuse. It would be incomprehensible, too, that man should use the name of his most faithful friend in the animal world—the dog—as a term of abuse if that creature had not incurred his contempt through two characteristics: that it is an animal whose dominant sense is that of smell and one which has no horror of excrement, and that it is not ashamed of its sexual functions. [Cf. some remarks on the history of Freud's views on this subject in the Editor's Note, p. 60 f. above.]

[1] [What Freud here calls the 'primitive family' he speaks of more often as the 'primal horde'; it corresponds to what Atkinson (1903), to whom the notion is largely due, named the 'Cyclopean family'. See, for all this, *Standard Ed.*, **13**, 142 ff.]

to impose on one another in order to keep this new state of affairs in being. The taboo-observances were the first 'right' or 'law'.[1] The communal life of human beings had, therefore, a two-fold foundation: the compulsion to work, which was created by external necessity, and the power of love, which made the man unwilling to be deprived of his sexual object—the woman—, and made the woman unwilling to be deprived of the part of herself which had been separated off from her—her child. Eros and Ananke [Love and Necessity] have become the parents of human civilization too. The first result of civilization was that even a fairly large number of people were now able to live together in a community. And since these two great powers were co-operating in this, one might expect that the further development of civilization would proceed smoothly towards an even better control over the external world and towards a further extension of the number of people included in the community. Nor is it easy to understand how this civilization could act upon its participants otherwise than to make them happy.

Before we go on to enquire from what quarter an interference might arise, this recognition of love as one of the foundations of civilization may serve as an excuse for a digression which will enable us to fill in a gap which we left in an earlier discussion [p. 82]. We said there that man's discovery that sexual (genital) love afforded him the strongest experiences of satisfaction, and in fact provided him with the prototype of all happiness, must have suggested to him that he should continue to seek the satisfaction of happiness in his life along the path of sexual relations and that he should make genital erotism the central point of his life. We went on to say that in doing so he made himself dependent in a most dangerous way on a portion of the external world, namely, his chosen love-object, and exposed himself to extreme suffering if he should be rejected by that object or should lose it through unfaithfulness or death. For that reason the wise men of every age have warned us most emphatically against this way of life; but in spite of this it has not lost its attraction for a great number of people.

A small minority are enabled by their constitution to find happiness, in spite of everything, along the path of love. But far-reaching mental changes in the function of love are necessary

[1] [The German '*Recht*' means both 'right' and 'law'.]

before this can happen. These people make themselves independent of their object's acquiescence by displacing what they mainly value from being loved on to loving; they protect themselves against the loss of the object by directing their love, not to single objects but to all men alike; and they avoid the uncertainties and disappointments of genital love by turning away from its sexual aims and transforming the instinct into an impulse with an *inhibited aim*. What they bring about in themselves in this way is a state of evenly suspended, steadfast, affectionate feeling, which has little external resemblance any more to the stormy agitations of genital love, from which it is nevertheless derived. Perhaps St. Francis of Assisi went furthest in thus exploiting love for the benefit of an inner feeling of happiness. Moreover, what we have recognized as one of the techniques for fulfilling the pleasure principle has often been brought into connection with religion; this connection may lie in the remote regions where the distinction between the ego and objects or between objects themselves is neglected. According to one ethical view, whose deeper motivation will become clear to us presently,[1] this readiness for a universal love of mankind and the world represents the highest standpoint which man can reach. Even at this early stage of the discussion I should like to bring forward my two main objections to this view. A love that does not discriminate seems to me to forfeit a part of its own value, by doing an injustice to its object; and secondly, not all men are worthy of love.

The love which founded the family continues to operate in civilization both in its original form, in which it does not renounce direct sexual satisfaction, and in its modified form as aim-inhibited affection. In each, it continues to carry on its function of binding together considerable numbers of people, and it does so in a more intensive fashion than can be effected through the interest of work in common. The careless way in which language uses the word 'love' has its genetic justification. People give the name 'love' to the relation between a man and a woman whose genital needs have led them to found a family; but they also give the name 'love' to the positive feelings between parents and children, and between the brothers and sisters of a family, although *we* are obliged to describe this as 'aim-inhibited love' or 'affection'. Love with an inhibited aim

[1] [See below, p. 112.]

was in fact originally fully sensual love, and it is so still in man's unconscious. Both—fully sensual love and aim-inhibited love—extend outside the family and create new bonds with people who before were strangers. Genital love leads to the formation of new families, and aim-inhibited love to 'friendships' which become valuable from a cultural standpoint because they escape some of the limitations of genital love, as, for instance, its exclusiveness. But in the course of development the relation of love to civilization loses its unambiguity. On the one hand love comes into opposition to the interests of civilization; on the other, civilization threatens love with substantial restrictions.

This rift between them seems unavoidable. The reason for it is not immediately recognizable. It expresses itself at first as a conflict between the family and the larger community to which the individual belongs. We have already perceived that one of the main endeavours of civilization is to bring people together into large unities. But the family will not give the individual up. The more closely the members of a family are attached to one another, the more often do they tend to cut themselves off from others, and the more difficult is it for them to enter into the wider circle of life. The mode of life in common which is phylogenetically the older, and which is the only one that exists in childhood, will not let itself be superseded by the cultural mode of life which has been acquired later. Detaching himself from his family becomes a task that faces every young person, and society often helps him in the solution of it by means of puberty and initiation rites. We get the impression that these are difficulties which are inherent in all psychical—and, indeed, at bottom, in all organic—development.

Furthermore, women soon come into opposition to civilization and display their retarding and restraining influence—those very women who, in the beginning, laid the foundations of civilization by the claims of their love. Women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life. The work of civilization has become increasingly the business of men, it confronts them with ever more difficult tasks and compels them to carry out instinctual sublimations of which women are little capable. Since a man does not have unlimited quantities of psychical energy at his disposal, he has to accomplish his tasks by making an expedient distribution of his libido. What he employs for cultural aims he to a great extent withdraws from women and

sexual life. His constant association with men, and his dependence on his relations with them, even estrange him from his duties as a husband and father. Thus the woman finds herself forced into the background by the claims of civilization and she adopts a hostile attitude towards it.

The tendency on the part of civilization to restrict sexual life is no less clear than its other tendency to expand the cultural unit. Its first, totemic, phase already brings with it the prohibition against an incestuous choice of object, and this is perhaps the most drastic mutilation which man's erotic life has in all time experienced. Taboos, laws and customs impose further restrictions, which affect both men and women. Not all civilizations go equally far in this; and the economic structure of the society also influences the amount of sexual freedom that remains. Here, as we already know, civilization is obeying the laws of economic necessity, since a large amount of the psychical energy which it uses for its own purposes has to be withdrawn from sexuality. In this respect civilization behaves towards sexuality as a people or a stratum of its population does which has subjected another one to its exploitation. Fear of a revolt by the suppressed elements drives it to stricter precautionary measures. A high-water mark in such a development has been reached in our Western European civilization. A cultural community is perfectly justified, psychologically, in starting by proscribing manifestations of the sexual life of children, for there would be no prospect of curbing the sexual lusts of adults if the ground had not been prepared for it in childhood. But such a community cannot in any way be justified in going to the length of actually *disavowing* such easily demonstrable, and, indeed, striking phenomena. As regards the sexually mature individual, the choice of an object is restricted to the opposite sex, and most extra-genital satisfactions are forbidden as perversions. The requirement, demonstrated in these prohibitions, that there shall be a single kind of sexual life for everyone, disregards the dissimilarities, whether innate or acquired, in the sexual constitution of human beings; it cuts off a fair number of them from sexual enjoyment, and so becomes the source of serious injustice. The result of such restrictive measures might be that in people who are normal—who are not prevented by their constitution—the whole of their sexual interests would flow without loss into the channels that are left open. But hetero-

sexual genital love, which has remained exempt from outlawry, is itself restricted by further limitations, in the shape of insistence upon legitimacy and monogamy. Present-day civilization makes it plain that it will only permit sexual relationships on the basis of a solitary, indissoluble bond between one man and one woman, and that it does not like sexuality as a source of pleasure in its own right and is only prepared to tolerate it because there is so far no substitute for it as a means of propagating the human race.

This, of course, is an extreme picture. Everybody knows that it has proved impossible to put it into execution, even for quite short periods. Only the weaklings have submitted to such an extensive encroachment upon their sexual freedom, and stronger natures have only done so subject to a compensatory condition, which will be mentioned later.[1] Civilized society has found itself obliged to pass over in silence many transgressions which, according to its own rescripts, it ought to have punished. But we must not err on the other side and assume that, because it does not achieve all its aims, such an attitude on the part of society is entirely innocuous. The sexual life of civilized man is notwithstanding severely impaired; it sometimes gives the impression of being in process of involution as a function, just as our teeth and hair seem to be as organs. One is probably justified in assuming that its importance as a source of feelings of happiness, and therefore in the fulfilment of our aim in life, has sensibly diminished.[2] Sometimes one seems to perceive that it is not only the pressure of civilization but something in the nature of the function itself which denies us full satisfaction and urges us along other paths. This may be wrong; it is hard to decide.[3]

[1] [The compensation is the obtaining of some measure of security. See below, p. 115.]

[2] Among the works of that sensitive English writer, John Galsworthy, who enjoys general recognition to-day, there is a short story of which I early formed a high opinion. It is called 'The Apple-Tree', and it brings home to us how the life of present-day civilized people leaves no room for the simple natural love of two human beings.

[3] The view expressed above is supported by the following considerations. Man is an animal organism with (like others) an unmistakably bisexual disposition. The individual corresponds to a fusion of two symmetrical halves, of which, according to some investigators, one is purely male and the other female. It is equally possible that each half was originally hermaphrodite. Sex is a biological fact which, although it is of extraordinary importance in mental life, is hard to grasp psycho-

logically. We are accustomed to say that every human being displays both male and female instinctual impulses, needs and attributes; but though anatomy, it is true, can point out the characteristic of maleness and femaleness, psychology cannot. For psychology the contrast between the sexes fades away into one between activity and passivity, in which we far too readily identify activity with maleness and passivity with femaleness, a view which is by no means universally confirmed in the animal kingdom. The theory of bisexuality is still surrounded by many obscurities and we cannot but feel it as a serious impediment in psychoanalysis that it has not yet found any link with the theory of the instincts. However this may be, if we assume it as a fact that each individual seeks to satisfy both male and female wishes in his sexual life, we are prepared for the possibility that those [two sets of] demands are not fulfilled by the same object, and that they interfere with each other unless they can be kept apart and each impulse guided into a particular channel that is suited to it. Another difficulty arises from the circumstance that there is so often associated with the erotic relationship, over and above its own sadistic components, a quota of plain inclination to aggression. The love-object will not always view these complications with the degree of understanding and tolerance shown by the peasant woman who complained that her husband did not love her any more, since he had not beaten her for a week.

The conjecture which goes deepest, however, is the one which takes its start from what I have said above in my footnote on p. 99f. It is to the effect that, with the assumption of an erect posture by man and with the depreciation of his sense of smell, it was not only his anal erotism which threatened to fall a victim to organic repression, but the whole of his sexuality; so that since this, the sexual function has been accompanied by a repugnance which cannot further be accounted for, and which prevents its complete satisfaction and forces it away from the sexual aim into sublimations and libidinal displacements. I know that Bleuler (1913) once pointed to the existence of a primary repelling attitude like this towards sexual life. All neurotics, and many others besides, take exception to the fact that '*inter urinas et faeces nascimur* [we are born between urine and faeces]'. The genitals, too, give rise to strong sensations of smell which many people cannot tolerate and which spoil sexual intercourse for them. Thus we should find that the deepest root of the sexual repression which advances along with civilization is the organic defence of the new form of life achieved with man's erect gait against his earlier animal existence. This result of scientific research coincides in a remarkable way with commonplace prejudices that have often made themselves heard. Nevertheless, these things are at present no more than unconfirmed possibilities which have not been substantiated by science. Nor should we forget that, in spite of the undeniable depreciation of olfactory stimuli, there exist even in Europe peoples among whom the strong genital odours which are so repellent to us are highly prized as sexual stimulants and who refuse to give them up. (Cf. the collections of folklore obtained from Iwan Bloch's questionnaire on the sense of smell in sexual life ['*Über den Geruchssinn in der vita*

*sexualis*'] published in different volumes of Friedrich S. Krauss's *Anthropophyteia*.)

[On the difficulty of finding a psychological meaning for 'maleness' and 'femaleness', see a long footnote added in 1915 to the third of Freud's *Three Essays* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 219–20.—The important consequences of the proximity between the sexual and excretory organs were first indicated by Freud in the unpublished Draft K sent to Fliess on January 1, 1896 (Freud, 1950*a*). He returned to the point frequently. Cf., for instance, the 'Dora' case history (1905*e* [1901]), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 31–2, and the second paper on 'The Psychology of Love' (1912*d*), ibid., **11**, 189. Cf. also the Editor's Note, p. 60 f. above.]

## V

PSYCHO-ANALYTIC work has shown us that it is precisely these frustrations of sexual life which people known as neurotics cannot tolerate. The neurotic creates substitutive satisfactions for himself in his symptoms, and these either cause him suffering in themselves or become sources of suffering for him by raising difficulties in his relations with his environment and the society he belongs to. The latter fact is easy to understand; the former presents us with a new problem. But civilization demands other sacrifices besides that of sexual satisfaction.

We have treated the difficulty of cultural development as a general difficulty of development by tracing it to the inertia of the libido, to its disinclination to give up an old position for a new one.[1] We are saying much the same thing when we derive the antithesis between civilization and sexuality from the circumstance that sexual love is a relationship between two individuals in which a third can only be superfluous or disturbing, whereas civilization depends on relationships between a considerable number of individuals. When a love-relationship is at its height there is no room left for any interest in the environment; a pair of lovers are sufficient to themselves, and do not even need the child they have in common to make them happy. In no other case does Eros so clearly betray the core of his being, his purpose of making one out of more than one; but when he has achieved this in the proverbial way through the love of two human beings, he refuses to go further.

So far, we can quite well imagine a cultural community consisting of double individuals like this, who, libidinally satisfied in themselves, are connected with one another through the bonds of common work and common interests. If this were so, civilization would not have to withdraw any energy from sexuality. But this desirable state of things does not, and never did, exist. Reality shows us that civilization is not content with the ties we have so far allowed it. It aims at binding the members of the community together in a libidinal way as well and

[1] [See, for instance, p. 103 above. For some remarks on Freud's use of the concept of 'psychical inertia' in general, see an Editor's footnote to Freud, 1915*f*, *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 272.]

employs every means to that end. It favours every path by which strong identifications can be established between the members of the community, and it summons up aim-inhibited libido on the largest scale so as to strengthen the communal bond by relations of friendship. In order for these aims to be fulfilled, a restriction upon sexual life is unavoidable. But we are unable to understand what the necessity is which forces civilization along this path and which causes its antagonism to sexuality. There must be some disturbing factor which we have not yet discovered.

The clue may be supplied by one of the ideal demands, as we have called them,[1] of civilized society. It runs: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' It is known throughout the world and is undoubtedly older than Christianity, which puts it forward as its proudest claim. Yet it is certainly not very old; even in historical times it was still strange to mankind. Let us adopt a naïve attitude towards it, as though we were hearing it for the first time; we shall be unable then to suppress a feeling of surprise and bewilderment. Why should we do it? What good will it do us? But, above all, how shall we achieve it? How can it be possible? My love is something valuable to me which I ought not to throw away without reflection. It imposes duties on me for whose fulfilment I must be ready to make sacrifices. If I love someone, he must deserve it in some way. (I leave out of account the use he may be to me, and also his possible significance for me as a sexual object, for neither of these two kinds of relationship comes into question where the precept to love my neighbour is concerned.) He deserves it if he is so like me in important ways that I can love myself in him; and he deserves it if he is so much more perfect than myself that I can love my ideal of my own self in him. Again, I have to love him if he is my friend's son, since the pain my friend would feel if any harm came to him would be my pain too—I should have to share it. But if he is a stranger to me and if he cannot attract me by any worth of his own or any significance that he may already have acquired for my emotional life, it will be hard for me to love him. Indeed, I should be wrong to do so, for my love is valued by all my own people as a sign of my preferring them, and it is an injustice to them if I put a stranger on

[1] [See p. 94 above. Cf. also ' "Civilized" Sexual Morality' (1908*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **9**, 199.]

a par with them. But if I am to love him (with this universal love) merely because he, too, is an inhabitant of this earth, like an insect, an earth-worm or a grass-snake, then I fear that only a small modicum of my love will fall to his share—not by any possibility as much as, by the judgement of my reason, I am entitled to retain for myself. What is the point of a precept enunciated with so much solemnity if its fulfilment cannot be recommended as reasonable?

On closer inspection, I find still further difficulties. Not merely is this stranger in general unworthy of my love; I must honestly confess that he has more claim to my hostility and even my hatred. He seems not to have the least trace of love for me and shows me not the slightest consideration. If it will do him any good he has no hesitation in injuring me, nor does he ask himself whether the amount of advantage he gains bears any proportion to the extent of the harm he does to me. Indeed, he need not even obtain an advantage; if he can satisfy any sort of desire by it, he thinks nothing of jeering at me, insulting me, slandering me and showing his superior power; and the more secure he feels and the more helpless I am, the more certainly I can expect him to behave like this to me. If he behaves differently, if he shows me consideration and forbearance as a stranger, I am ready to treat him in the same way, in any case and quite apart from any precept. Indeed, if this grandiose commandment had run 'Love thy neighbour as thy neighbour loves thee', I should not take exception to it. And there is a second commandment, which seems to me even more incomprehensible and arouses still stronger opposition in me. It is 'Love thine enemies'. If I think it over, however, I see that I am wrong in treating it as a greater imposition. At bottom it is the same thing.[1]

[1] A great imaginative writer may permit himself to give expression—jokingly, at all events—to psychological truths that are severely proscribed. Thus Heine confesses: 'Mine is a most peaceable disposition. My wishes are: a humble cottage with a thatched roof, but a good bed, good food, the freshest milk and butter, flowers before my window, and a few fine trees before my door; and if God wants to make my happiness complete, he will grant me the joy of seeing some six or seven of my enemies hanging from those trees. Before their death I shall, moved in my heart, forgive them all the wrong they did me in their lifetime. One must, it is true, forgive one's enemies—but not before they have been hanged.' (*Gedanken und Einfälle* [Section I].)

I think I can now hear a dignified voice admonishing me: 'It is precisely because your neighbour is not worthy of love, and is on the contrary your enemy, that you should love him as yourself.' I then understand that the case is one like that of *Credo quia absurdum.*[1]

Now it is very probable that my neighbour, when he is enjoined to love me as himself, will answer exactly as I have done and will repel me for the same reasons. I hope he will not have the same objective grounds for doing so, but he will have the same idea as I have. Even so, the behaviour of human beings shows differences, which ethics, disregarding the fact that such differences are determined, classifies as 'good' or 'bad'. So long as these undeniable differences have not been removed, obedience to high ethical demands entails damage to the aims of civilization, for it puts a positive premium on being bad. One is irresistibly reminded of an incident in the French Chamber when capital punishment was being debated. A member had been passionately supporting its abolition and his speech was being received with tumultuous applause, when a voice from the hall called out: 'Que messieurs les assassins commencent!' [2]

The element of truth behind all this, which people are so ready to disavow, is that men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. *Homo homini lupus.*[3] Who, in the face of all his experience of life and of history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion? As a rule this cruel aggressiveness waits for some provocation or puts itself at the service of some other purpose, whose goal might also have been reached by milder measures. In circumstances that are favourable

[1] [See Chapter V of *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*), p. 28 above. Freud returns to the question of the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself below, on p. 142 f.]

[2] ['It's the murderers who should make the first move.']

[3] ['Man is a wolf to man.' Derived from Plautus, *Asinaria* II, iv, 88.]

to it, when the mental counter-forces which ordinarily inhibit it are out of action, it also manifests itself spontaneously and reveals man as a savage beast to whom consideration towards his own kind is something alien. Anyone who calls to mind the atrocities committed during the racial migrations or the invasions of the Huns, or by the people known as Mongols under Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane, or at the capture of Jerusalem by the pious Crusaders, or even, indeed, the horrors of the recent World War—anyone who calls these things to mind will have to bow humbly before the truth of this view.

The existence of this inclination to aggression, which we can detect in ourselves and justly assume to be present in others, is the factor which disturbs our relations with our neighbour and which forces civilization into such a high expenditure [of energy]. In consequence of this primary mutual hostility of human beings, civilized society is perpetually threatened with disintegration. The interest of work in common would not hold it together; instinctual passions are stronger than reasonable interests. Civilization has to use its utmost efforts in order to set limits to man's aggressive instincts and to hold the manifestations of them in check by psychical reaction-formations. Hence, therefore, the use of methods intended to incite people into identifications and aim-inhibited relationships of love, hence the restriction upon sexual life, and hence too the ideal's commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself—a commandment which is really justified by the fact that nothing else runs so strongly counter to the original nature of man. In spite of every effort, these endeavours of civilization have not so far achieved very much. It hopes to prevent the crudest excesses of brutal violence by itself assuming the right to use violence against criminals, but the law is not able to lay hold of the more cautious and refined manifestations of human aggressiveness. The time comes when each one of us has to give up as illusions the expectations which, in his youth, he pinned upon his fellowmen, and when he may learn how much difficulty and pain has been added to his life by their ill-will. At the same time, it would be unfair to reproach civilization with trying to eliminate strife and competition from human activity. These things are undoubtedly indispensable. But opposition is not necessarily enmity; it is merely misused and made an *occasion* for enmity.

The communists believe that they have found the path to

deliverance from our evils. According to them, man is wholly good and is well-disposed to his neighbour; but the institution of private property has corrupted his nature. The ownership of private wealth gives the individual power, and with it the temptation to ill-treat his neighbour; while the man who is excluded from possession is bound to rebel in hostility against his oppressor. If private property were abolished, all wealth held in common, and everyone allowed to share in the enjoyment of it, ill-will and hostility would disappear among men. Since everyone's needs would be satisfied, no one would have any reason to regard another as his enemy; all would willingly undertake the work that was necessary. I have no concern with any economic criticisms of the communist system; I cannot enquire into whether the abolition of private property is expedient or advantageous.[1] But I am able to recognize that the psychological premisses on which the system is based are an untenable illusion. In abolishing private property we deprive the human love of aggression of one of its instruments, certainly a strong one, though certainly not the strongest; but we have in no way altered the differences in power and influence which are misused by aggressiveness, nor have we altered anything in its nature. Aggressiveness was not created by property. It reigned almost without limit in primitive times, when property was still very scanty, and it already shows itself in the nursery almost before property has given up its primal, anal form; it forms the basis of every relation of affection and love among people (with the single exception, perhaps, of the mother's relation to her male child[2]). If we do away with personal rights over material wealth, there still remains prerogative in the field of sexual relationships, which is bound to become the

[1] Anyone who has tasted the miseries of poverty in his own youth and has experienced the indifference and arrogance of the well-to-do, should be safe from the suspicion of having no understanding or good will towards endeavours to fight against the inequality of wealth among men and all that it leads to. To be sure, if an attempt is made to base this fight upon an abstract demand, in the name of justice, for equality for all men, there is a very obvious objection to be made—that nature, by endowing individuals with extremely unequal physical attributes and mental capacities, has introduced injustices against which there is no remedy.

[2] [Cf. a footnote to Chapter VI of *Group Psychology* (1921*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 101*n*. A rather longer discussion of the point occurs near the end of Lecture XXXIII of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*).]

source of the strongest dislike and the most violent hostility among men who in other respects are on an equal footing. If we were to remove this factor, too, by allowing complete freedom of sexual life and thus abolishing the family, the germ-cell of civilization, we cannot, it is true, easily foresee what new paths the development of civilization could take; but one thing we can expect, and that is that this indestructible feature of human nature will follow it there.

It is clearly not easy for men to give up the satisfaction of this inclination to aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it. The advantage which a comparatively small cultural group offers of allowing this instinct an outlet in the form of hostility against intruders is not to be despised. It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness. I once discussed the phenomenon that it is precisely communities with adjoining territories, and related to each other in other ways as well, who are engaged in constant feuds and in ridiculing each other—like the Spaniards and Portuguese, for instance, the North Germans and South Germans, the English and Scotch, and so on.[1] I gave this phenomenon the name of 'the narcissism of minor differences', a name which does not do much to explain it. We can now see that it is a convenient and relatively harmless satisfaction of the inclination to aggression, by means of which cohesion between the members of the community is made easier. In this respect the Jewish people, scattered everywhere, have rendered most useful services to the civilizations of the countries that have been their hosts; but unfortunately all the massacres of the Jews in the Middle Ages did not suffice to make that period more peaceful and secure for their Christian fellows. When once the Apostle Paul had posited universal love between men as the foundation of his Christian community, extreme intolerance on the part of Christendom towards those who remained outside it became the inevitable consequence. To the Romans, who had not founded their communal life as a State upon love, religious intolerance was something foreign, although with them religion was a concern of the State and the State was permeated by religion. Neither was it an unaccountable chance

[1] [See Chapter VI of *Group Psychology* (1921*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 101, and 'The Taboo of Virginity' (1918*a*), ibid., **11**, 199.]

that the dream of a Germanic world-dominion called for anti-semitism as its complement; and it is intelligible that the attempt to establish a new, communist civilization in Russia should find its psychological support in the persecution of the bourgeois. One only wonders, with concern, what the Soviets will do after they have wiped out their bourgeois.

If civilization imposes such great sacrifices not only on man's sexuality but on his aggressivity, we can understand better why it is hard for him to be happy in that civilization. In fact, primitive man was better off in knowing no restrictions of instinct. To counterbalance this, his prospects of enjoying this happiness for any length of time were very slender. Civilized man has exchanged a portion of his possibilities of happiness for a portion of security. We must not forget, however, that in the primal family only the head of it enjoyed this instinctual freedom; the rest lived in slavish suppression. In that primal period of civilization, the contrast between a minority who enjoyed the advantages of civilization and a majority who were robbed of those advantages was, therefore, carried to extremes. As regards the primitive peoples who exist to-day, careful researches have shown that their instinctual life is by no means to be envied for its freedom. It is subject to restrictions of a different kind but perhaps of greater severity than those attaching to modern civilized man.

When we justly find fault with the present state of our civilization for so inadequately fulfilling our demands for a plan of life that shall make us happy, and for allowing the existence of so much suffering which could probably be avoided—when, with unsparing criticism, we try to uncover the roots of its imperfection, we are undoubtedly exercising a proper right and are not showing ourselves enemies of civilization. We may expect gradually to carry through such alterations in our civilization as will better satisfy our needs and will escape our criticisms. But perhaps we may also familiarize ourselves with the idea that there are difficulties attaching to the nature of civilization which will not yield to any attempt at reform. Over and above the tasks of restricting the instincts, which we are prepared for, there forces itself on our notice the danger of a state of things which might be termed 'the psychological poverty of groups'.[1] This danger is most threatening where

[1] [The German *'psychologisches Elend'* seems to be a version of Janet's

the bonds of a society are chiefly constituted by the identification of its members with one another, while individuals of the leader type do not acquire the importance that should fall to them in the formation of a group.[1] The present cultural state of America would give us a good opportunity for studying the damage to civilization which is thus to be feared. But I shall avoid the temptation of entering upon a critique of American civilization; I do not wish to give an impression of wanting myself to employ American methods.

expression '*misère psychologique*' applied by him to describe the incapacity for mental synthesis which he attributes to neurotics.]

[1] Cf. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921*c*).

## VI

In none of my previous writings have I had so strong a feeling as now that what I am describing is common knowledge and that I am using up paper and ink and, in due course, the compositor's and printer's work and material in order to expound things which are, in fact, self-evident. For that reason I should be glad to seize the point if it were to appear that the recognition of a special, independent aggressive instinct means an alteration of the psycho-analytic theory of the instincts.

We shall see, however, that this is not so and that it is merely a matter of bringing into sharper focus a turn of thought arrived at long ago and of following out its consequences. Of all the slowly developed parts of analytic theory, the theory of the instincts is the one that has felt its way the most painfully forward.[1] And yet that theory was so indispensable to the whole structure that something had to be put in its place. In what was at first my utter perplexity, I took as my starting-point a saying of the poet-philosopher, Schiller, that 'hunger and love are what moves the world'.[2] Hunger could be taken to represent the instincts which aim at preserving the individual; while love strives after objects, and its chief function, favoured in every way by nature, is the preservation of the species. Thus, to begin with, ego-instincts and object-instincts confronted each other. It was to denote the energy of the latter and only the latter instincts that I introduced the term 'libido'.[3] Thus the antithesis was between the ego-instincts and the 'libidinal' instincts of love (in its widest sense[4]) which were directed to an object. One of these object-instincts, the sadistic instinct, stood out from the rest, it is true, in that its aim was so very far from being loving. Moreover it was obviously in some respects attached to the ego-instincts: it could not hide its close affinity with instincts of mastery which have no libidinal purpose. But these discrepancies were got over; after all, sadism was clearly a part of

[1] [Some account of the history of Freud's theory of the instincts will be found in the Editor's Note to his paper 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 113 ff.] [2] ['Die Weltweisen.']

[3] [In Section II of the first paper on anxiety neurosis (1895*b*).]

[4] [I.e. as used by Plato. See Chapter IV of *Group Psychology* (1921*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 99.]

sexual life, in the activities of which affection could be replaced by cruelty. Neurosis was regarded as the outcome of a struggle between the interest of self-preservation and the demands of the libido, a struggle in which the ego had been victorious but at the price of severe sufferings and renunciations.

Every analyst will admit that even to-day this view has not the sound of a long-discarded error. Nevertheless, alterations in it became essential, as our enquiries advanced from the repressed to the repressing forces, from the object-instincts to the ego. The decisive step forward was the introduction of the concept of narcissism—that is to say, the discovery that the ego itself is cathected with libido, that the ego, indeed, is the libido's original home, and remains to some extent its headquarters.[1] This narcissistic libido turns towards objects, and thus becomes object-libido; and it can change back into narcissistic libido once more. The concept of narcissism made it possible to obtain an analytic understanding of the traumatic neuroses and of many of the affections bordering on the psychoses, as well as of the latter themselves. It was not necessary to give up our interpretation of the transference neuroses as attempts made by the ego to defend itself against sexuality; but the concept of libido was endangered. Since the ego-instincts, too, were libidinal, it seemed for a time inevitable that we should make libido coincide with instinctual energy in general, as C. G. Jung had already advocated earlier. Nevertheless, there still remained in me a kind of conviction, for which I was not as yet able to find reasons, that the instincts could not all be of the same kind. My next step was taken in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*), when the compulsion to repeat and the conservative character of instinctual life first attracted my attention. Starting from speculations on the beginning of life and from biological parallels, I drew the conclusion that, besides the instinct to preserve living substance and to join it into ever larger units,[2] there must exist another, contrary instinct seeking to dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primaeval, inorganic

[1] [Cf. in this connection the editorial Appendix B to *The Ego and the Id*, *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 63.]

[2] The opposition which thus emerges between the ceaseless trend by Eros towards extension and the general conservative nature of the instincts is striking, and it may become the starting-point for the study of further problems.

state. That is to say, as well as Eros there was an instinct of death. The phenomena of life could be explained from the concurrent or mutually opposing action of these two instincts. It was not easy, however, to demonstrate the activities of this supposed death instinct. The manifestations of Eros were conspicuous and noisy enough. It might be assumed that the death instinct operated silently within the organism towards its dissolution, but that, of course, was no proof. A more fruitful idea was that a portion of the instinct is diverted towards the external world and comes to light as an instinct of aggressiveness and destructiveness. In this way the instinct itself could be pressed into the service of Eros, in that the organism was destroying some other thing, whether animate or inanimate, instead of destroying its own self. Conversely, any restriction of this aggressiveness directed outwards would be bound to increase the self-destruction, which is in any case proceeding. At the same time one can suspect from this example that the two kinds of instinct seldom—perhaps never—appear in isolation from each other, but are alloyed with each other in varying and very different proportions and so become unrecognizable to our judgement. In sadism, long since known to us as a component instinct of sexuality, we should have before us a particularly strong alloy of this kind between trends of love and the destructive instinct; while its counterpart, masochism, would be a union between destructiveness directed inwards and sexuality —a union which makes what is otherwise an imperceptible trend into a conspicuous and tangible one.

The assumption of the existence of an instinct of death or destruction has met with resistance even in analytic circles; I am aware that there is a frequent inclination rather to ascribe whatever is dangerous and hostile in love to an original bipolarity in its own nature. To begin with it was only tentatively that I put forward the views I have developed here,[1] but in the course of time they have gained such a hold upon me that I can no longer think in any other way. To my mind, they are far more serviceable from a theoretical standpoint than any other possible ones; they provide that simplification, without either ignoring or doing violence to the facts, for which we strive in scientific work. I know that in sadism and masochism we have always seen before us manifestations of the destructive instinct

[1] [Cf. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 59.]

(directed outwards and inwards), strongly alloyed with erotism; but I can no longer understand how we can have overlooked the ubiquity of non-erotic aggressivity and destructiveness and can have failed to give it its due place in our interpretation of life. (The desire for destruction when it is directed *inwards* mostly eludes our perception, of course, unless it is tinged with erotism.) I remember my own defensive attitude when the idea of an instinct of destruction first emerged in psycho-analytic literature, and how long it took before I became receptive to it.[1] That others should have shown, and still show, the same attitude of rejection surprises me less. For 'little children do not like it'[2] when there is talk of the inborn human inclination to 'badness', to aggressiveness and destructiveness, and so to cruelty as well. God has made them in the image of His own perfection; nobody wants to be reminded how hard it is to reconcile the undeniable existence of evil—despite the protestations of Christian Science—with His all-powerfulness or His all-goodness. The Devil would be the best way out as an excuse for God; in that way he would be playing the same part as an agent of economic discharge as the Jew does in the world of the Aryan ideal.[3] But even so, one can hold God responsible for the existence of the Devil just as well as for the existence of the wickedness which the Devil embodies. In view of these difficulties, each of us will be well advised, on some suitable occasion, to make a low bow to the deeply moral nature of mankind; it will help us to be generally popular and much will be forgiven us for it.[4]

[1] [See some comments on this in the Editor's Introduction, p. 61 ff. above.]

[2] ['Denn die Kindlein, Sie hören es nicht gerne.' A quotation from Goethe's poem 'Die Ballade vom vertriebenen und heimgekehrten Grafen'.]

[3] [Cf. p. 114 above.]

[4] In Goethe's Mephistopheles we have a quite exceptionally convincing identification of the principle of evil with the destructive instinct:

> Denn alles, was entsteht,
> Ist wert, dass es zu Grunde geht . . .
> So ist dann alles, was Ihr Sünde,
> Zerstörung, kurz das Böse nennt,
> Mein eigentliches Element.
>
> [For all things, from the Void
> Called forth, deserve to be destroyed . . .
> Thus, all which you as Sin have rated—

The name 'libido' can once more be used to denote the manifestations of the power of Eros in order to distinguish them from the energy of the death instinct.[1] It must be confessed that we have much greater difficulty in grasping that instinct; we can only suspect it, as it were, as something in the background behind Eros, and it escapes detection unless its presence is betrayed by its being alloyed with Eros. It is in sadism, where the death instinct twists the erotic aim in its own sense and yet at the same time fully satisfies the erotic urge, that we succeed in obtaining the clearest insight into its nature and its relation to Eros. But even where it emerges without any sexual purpose, in the blindest fury of destructiveness, we cannot fail to recognize that the satisfaction of the instinct is accompanied by an extraordinarily high degree of narcissistic enjoyment, owing to its presenting the ego with a fulfilment of the latter's old wishes for omnipotence. The instinct of destruction, moderated and tamed, and, as it were, inhibited in its aim, must, when it is directed towards objects, provide the ego with the satisfaction of its vital needs and with control over nature. Since the assumption of the existence of the instinct is mainly based on theoretical

> Destruction,—aught with Evil blent,—
> That is my proper element.]

The Devil himself names as his adversary, not what is holy and good, but Nature's power to create, to multiply life—that is, Eros:

> Der Luft, dem Wasser, wie der Erden
> Entwinden tausend Keime sich,
> Im Trocknen, Feuchten, Warmen, Kalten!
> Hätt' ich mir nicht die Flamme vorbehalten,
> Ich hätte nichts Aparts für mich.
>
> [From Water, Earth, and Air unfolding,
> A thousand germs break forth and grow,
> In dry, and wet, and warm, and chilly:
> And had I not the Flame reserved, why, really,
> There's nothing special of my own to show.

Both passages are from Goethe's *Faust*, Part I, Scene 3. Translated by Bayard Taylor. There is a passing allusion to the second passage in Chapter I (G) of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *Standard Ed.*, 4, 78.]

[1] Our present point of view can be roughly expressed in the statement that libido has a share in every instinctual manifestation, but that not everything in that manifestation is libido.

grounds, we must also admit that it is not entirely proof against theoretical objections. But this is how things appear to us now, in the present state of our knowledge; future research and reflection will no doubt bring further light which will decide the matter.

In all that follows I adopt the standpoint, therefore, that the inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man, and I return to my view [p. 112] that it constitutes the greatest impediment to civilization. At one point in the course of this enquiry [p. 96] I was led to the idea that civilization was a special process which mankind undergoes, and I am still under the influence of that idea. I may now add that civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind. Why this has to happen, we do not know; the work of Eros is precisely this.[1] These collections of men are to be libidinally bound to one another. Necessity alone, the advantages of work in common, will not hold them together. But man's natural aggressive instinct, the hostility of each against all and of all against each, opposes this programme of civilization. This aggressive instinct is the derivative and the main representative of the death instinct which we have found alongside of Eros and which shares world-dominion with it. And now, I think, the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of, and the evolution of civilization may therefore be simply described as the struggle for life of the human species.[2] And it is this battle of the giants that our nurse-maids try to appease with their lullaby about Heaven.[3]

[1] [See *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*) passim.]

[2] And we may probably add more precisely, a struggle for life in the shape it was bound to assume after a certain event which still remains to be discovered.

[3] ['*Eiapopeia vom Himmel.*' A quotation from Heine's poem *Deutschland*, Caput I.]

## VII

WHY do our relatives, the animals, not exhibit any such cultural struggle? We do not know. Very probably some of them—the bees, the ants, the termites—strove for thousands of years before they arrived at the State institutions, the distribution of functions and the restrictions on the individual, for which we admire them to-day. It is a mark of our present condition that we know from our own feelings that we should not think ourselves happy in any of these animal States or in any of the roles assigned in them to the individual. In the case of other animal species it may be that a temporary balance has been reached between the influences of their environment and the mutually contending instincts within them, and that thus a cessation of development has come about. It may be that in primitive man a fresh access of libido kindled a renewed burst of activity on the part of the destructive instinct. There are a great many questions here to which as yet there is no answer.

Another question concerns us more nearly. What means does civilization employ in order to inhibit the aggressiveness which opposes it, to make it harmless, to get rid of it, perhaps? We have already become acquainted with a few of these methods, but not yet with the one that appears to be the most important. This we can study in the history of the development of the individual. What happens in him to render his desire for aggression innocuous? Something very remarkable, which we should never have guessed and which is nevertheless quite obvious. His aggressiveness is introjected, internalized; it is, in point of fact, sent back to where it came from—that is, it is directed towards his own ego. There it is taken over by a portion of the ego, which sets itself over against the rest of the ego as super-ego, and which now, in the form of 'conscience', is ready to put into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that the ego would have liked to satisfy upon other, extraneous individuals. The tension between the harsh super-ego and the ego that is subjected to it, is called by us the sense of guilt; it expresses itself as a need for punishment.[1] Civilization, therefore, obtains

[1] [Cf. 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 166–7.]

mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city.

As to the origin of the sense of guilt, the analyst has different views from other psychologists; but even he does not find it easy to give an account of it. To begin with, if we ask how a person comes to have a sense of guilt, we arrive at an answer which cannot be disputed: a person feels guilty (devout people would say 'sinful') when he has done something which he knows to be 'bad'. But then we notice how little this answer tells us. Perhaps, after some hesitation, we shall add that even when a person has not actually *done* the bad thing but has only recognized in himself an *intention* to do it, he may regard himself as guilty; and the question then arises of why the intention is regarded as equal to the deed. Both cases, however, presuppose that one had already recognized that what is bad is reprehensible, is something that must not be carried out. How is this judgement arrived at? We may reject the existence of an original, as it were natural, capacity to distinguish good from bad. What is bad is often not at all what is injurious or dangerous to the ego; on the contrary, it may be something which is desirable and enjoyable to the ego. Here, therefore, there is an extraneous influence at work, and it is this that decides what is to be called good or bad. Since a person's own feelings would not have led him along this path, he must have had a motive for submitting to this extraneous influence. Such a motive is easily discovered in his helplessness and his dependence on other people, and it can best be designated as fear of loss of love. If he loses the love of another person upon whom he is dependent, he also ceases to be protected from a variety of dangers. Above all, he is exposed to the danger that this stronger person will show his superiority in the form of punishment. At the beginning, therefore, what is bad is whatever causes one to be threatened with loss of love. For fear of that loss, one must avoid it. This, too, is the reason why it makes little difference whether one has already done the bad thing or only intends to do it. In either case the danger only sets in if and when the authority discovers it, and in either case the authority would behave in the same way.

This state of mind is called a 'bad conscience'; but actually

it does not deserve this name, for at this stage the sense of guilt is clearly only a fear of loss of love, 'social' anxiety. In small children it can never be anything else, but in many adults, too, it has only changed to the extent that the place of the father or the two parents is taken by the larger human community. Consequently, such people habitually allow themselves to do any bad thing which promises them enjoyment, so long as they are sure that the authority will not know anything about it or cannot blame them for it; they are afraid only of being found out.[1] Present-day society has to reckon in general with this state of mind.

A great change takes place only when the authority is internalized through the establishment of a super-ego. The phenomena of conscience then reach a higher stage. Actually, it is not until now that we should speak of conscience or a sense of guilt.[2] At this point, too, the fear of being found out comes to an end; the distinction, moreover, between doing something bad and wishing to do it disappears entirely, since nothing can be hidden from the super-ego, not even thoughts. It is true that the seriousness of the situation from a real point of view has passed away, for the new authority, the super-ego, has no motive that we know of for ill-treating the ego, with which it is intimately bound up; but genetic influence, which leads to the survival of what is past and has been surmounted, makes itself felt in the fact that fundamentally things remain as they were at the beginning. The super-ego torments the sinful ego with the same feeling of anxiety and is on the watch for opportunities of getting it punished by the external world.

At this second stage of development, the conscience exhibits a peculiarity which was absent from the first stage and which is no longer easy to account for.[3] For the more virtuous a man

[1] This reminds one of Rousseau's famous mandarin. [The problem raised by Rousseau had been quoted in full in Freud's paper on 'Our Attitude towards Death' (1915*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 298.]

[2] Everyone of discernment will understand and take into account the fact that in this summary description we have sharply delimited events which in reality occur by gradual transitions, and that it is not merely a question of the *existence* of a super-ego but of its relative strength and sphere of influence. All that has been said above about conscience and guilt is, moreover, common knowledge and almost undisputed.

[3] [This paradox had been discussed by Freud earlier. See, for instance, Chapter V of *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 54, where other references are given.]

is, the more severe and distrustful is its behaviour, so that ultimately it is precisely those people who have carried saintliness[1] furthest who reproach themselves with the worst sinfulness. This means that virtue forfeits some part of its promised reward; the docile and continent ego does not enjoy the trust of its mentor, and strives in vain, it would seem, to acquire it. The objection will at once be made that these difficulties are artificial ones, and it will be said that a stricter and more vigilant conscience is precisely the hallmark of a moral man. Moreover, when saints call themselves sinners, they are not so wrong, considering the temptations to instinctual satisfaction to which they are exposed in a specially high degree—since, as is well known, temptations are merely increased by constant frustration, whereas an occasional satisfaction of them causes them to diminish, at least for the time being. The field of ethics, which is so full of problems, presents us with another fact: namely that ill-luck—that is, external frustration—so greatly enhances the power of the conscience in the super-ego. As long as things go well with a man, his conscience is lenient and lets the ego do all sorts of things; but when misfortune befalls him, he searches his soul, acknowledges his sinfulness, heightens the demands of his conscience, imposes abstinences on himself and punishes himself with penances.[2] Whole peoples have behaved in this way, and still do. This, however, is easily explained by the original infantile stage of conscience, which, as we see, is not given up after the introjection into the super-ego, but persists alongside of it and behind it. Fate is regarded as a substitute for the parental agency. If a man is unfortunate it means that he is no longer loved by this highest power; and, threatened by such a loss of love, he once more bows to the parental

[1] ['*Heiligkeit.*' The same term, used in the different sense of 'holiness', is discussed by Freud in some other passages. Cf. the paper on 'civilized' sexual morality (1908*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **9**, 187.]

[2] This enhancing of morality as a consequence of ill-luck has been illustrated by Mark Twain in a delightful little story, *The First Melon I ever Stole.* This first melon happened to be unripe. I heard Mark Twain tell the story himself in one of his public readings. After he had given out the title, he stopped and asked himself as though he was in doubt: '*Was* it the first?' With this, everything had been said. The first melon was evidently not the only one. [This last sentence was added in 1931.—In a letter to Fliess of February 9th, 1898, Freud reported that he had attended a reading by Mark Twain a few days earlier. (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 83.)]

representative in his super-ego—a representative whom, in his days of good fortune, he was ready to neglect. This becomes especially clear where Fate is looked upon in the strictly religious sense of being nothing else than an expression of the Divine Will. The people of Israel had believed themselves to be the favourite child of God, and when the great Father caused misfortune after misfortune to rain down upon this people of his, they were never shaken in their belief in his relationship to them or questioned his power or righteousness. Instead, they produced the prophets, who held up their sinfulness before them; and out of their sense of guilt they created the over-strict commandments of their priestly religion.[1] It is remarkable how differently a primitive man behaves. If he has met with a misfortune, he does not throw the blame on himself but on his fetish, which has obviously not done its duty, and he gives it a thrashing instead of punishing himself.

Thus we know of two origins of the sense of guilt: one arising from fear of an authority, and the other, later on, arising from fear of the super-ego. The first insists upon a renunciation of instinctual satisfactions; the second, as well as doing this, presses for punishment, since the continuance of the forbidden wishes cannot be concealed from the super-ego. We have also learned how the severity of the super-ego—the demands of conscience—is to be understood. It is simply a continuation of the severity of the external authority, to which it has succeeded and which it has in part replaced. We now see in what relationship the renunciation of instinct stands to the sense of guilt. Originally, renunciation of instinct was the result of fear of an external authority: one renounced one's satisfactions in order not to lose its love. If one has carried out this renunciation, one is, as it were, quits with the authority and no sense of guilt should remain. But with fear of the super-ego the case is different. Here, instinctual renunciation is not enough, for the wish persists and cannot be concealed from the super-ego. Thus, in spite of the renunciation that has been made, a sense of guilt comes about. This constitutes a great economic disadvantage in the erection of a super-ego, or, as we may put it, in the formation of a conscience. Instinctual

[1] [A very much more extended account of the relations of the people of Israel to their God is to be found in Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*).]

renunciation now no longer has a completely liberating effect; virtuous continence is no longer rewarded with the assurance of love. A threatened external unhappiness—loss of love and punishment on the part of the external authority—has been exchanged for a permanent internal unhappiness, for the tension of the sense of guilt.

These interrelations are so complicated and at the same time so important that, at the risk of repeating myself, I shall approach them from yet another angle. The chronological sequence, then, would be as follows. First comes renunciation of instinct owing to fear of aggression by the *external* authority. (This is, of course, what fear of the loss of love amounts to, for love is a protection against this punitive aggression.) After that comes the erection of an *internal* authority, and renunciation of instinct owing to fear of it—owing to fear of conscience.[1] In this second situation bad intentions are equated with bad actions, and hence come a sense of guilt and a need for punishment. The aggressiveness of conscience keeps up the aggressiveness of the authority. So far things have no doubt been made clear; but where does this leave room for the reinforcing influence of misfortune (of renunciation imposed from without) [p. 126], and for the extraordinary severity of conscience in the best and most tractable people [p. 125 f.]? We have already explained both these peculiarities of conscience, but we probably still have an impression that those explanations do not go to the bottom of the matter, and leave a residue still unexplained. And here at last an idea comes in which belongs entirely to psycho-analysis and which is foreign to people's ordinary way of thinking. This idea is of a sort which enables us to understand why the subject-matter was bound to seem so confused and obscure to us. For it tells us that conscience (or more correctly, the anxiety which later becomes conscience) is indeed the cause of instinctual renunciation to begin with, but that later the relationship is reversed. Every renunciation of instinct now becomes a dynamic source of conscience and every fresh renunciation increases the latter's severity and intolerance. If we could only bring it better into harmony with what we already know about the history of the origin of conscience, we should be

[1] ['*Gewissensangst.*' Some remarks on this term will be found in an Editor's footnote to Chapter VII of *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 128; *I.P.L.*, **28**, 42.]

tempted to defend the paradoxical statement that conscience is the result of instinctual renunciation, or that instinctual renunciation (imposed on us from without) creates conscience, which then demands further instinctual renunciation.

The contradiction between this statement and what we have previously said about the genesis of conscience is in point of fact not so very great, and we see a way of further reducing it. In order to make our exposition easier, let us take as our example the aggressive instinct, and let us assume that the renunciation in question is always a renunciation of aggression. (This, of course, is only to be taken as a temporary assumption.) The effect of instinctual renunciation on the conscience then is that every piece of aggression whose satisfaction the subject gives up is taken over by the super-ego and increases the latter's aggressiveness (against the ego). This does not harmonize well with the view that the original aggressiveness of conscience is a continuance of the severity of the external authority and therefore has nothing to do with renunciation. But the discrepancy is removed if we postulate a different derivation for this first instalment of the super-ego's aggressivity. A considerable amount of aggressiveness must be developed in the child against the authority which prevents him from having his first, but none the less his most important, satisfactions, whatever the kind of instinctual deprivation that is demanded of him may be; but he is obliged to renounce the satisfaction of this revengeful aggressiveness. He finds his way out of this economically difficult situation with the help of familiar mechanisms. By means of identification he takes the unattackable authority into himself. The authority now turns into his super-ego and enters into possession of all the aggressiveness which a child would have liked to exercise against it. The child's ego has to content itself with the unhappy role of the authority —the father—who has been thus degraded. Here, as so often, the [real] situation is reversed: 'If I were the father and you were the child, I should treat you badly.' The relationship between the super-ego and the ego is a return, distorted by a wish, of the real relationships between the ego, as yet undivided, and an external object. That is typical, too. But the essential difference is that the original severity of the super-ego does not —or does not so much—represent the severity which one has experienced from it [the object], or which one attributes to it;

it represents rather one's own aggressiveness towards it. If this is correct, we may assert truly that in the beginning conscience arises through the suppression of an aggressive impulse, and that it is subsequently reinforced by fresh suppressions of the same kind.

Which of these two views is correct? The earlier one, which genetically seemed so unassailable, or the newer one, which rounds off the theory in such a welcome fashion? Clearly, and by the evidence, too, of direct observations, both are justified. They do not contradict each other, and they even coincide at one point, for the child's revengeful aggressiveness will be in part determined by the amount of punitive aggression which he expects from his father. Experience shows, however, that the severity of the super-ego which a child develops in no way corresponds to the severity of treatment which he has himself met with.[1] The severity of the former seems to be independent of that of the latter. A child who has been very leniently brought up can acquire a very strict conscience. But it would also be wrong to exaggerate this independence; it is not difficult to convince oneself that severity of upbringing does also exert a strong influence on the formation of the child's super-ego. What it amounts to is that in the formation of the super-ego and the emergence of a conscience innate constitutional factors and influences from the real environment act in combination. This is not at all surprising; on the contrary, it is a universal aetiological condition for all such processes.[2]

[1] As has rightly been emphasized by Melanie Klein and by other English, writers.

[2] The two main types of pathogenic methods of upbringing—over-strictness and spoiling—have been accurately assessed by Franz Alexander in his book *The Psychoanalysis of the Total Personality* (1927) in connection with Aichhorn's study of delinquency [*Wayward Youth*, 1925]. The 'unduly lenient and indulgent father' is the cause of children's forming an over-severe super-ego, because, under the impression of the love that they receive, they have no other outlet for their aggressiveness but turning it inwards. In delinquent children, who have been brought up without love, the tension between ego and super-ego is lacking, and the whole of their aggressiveness can be directed outwards. Apart from a constitutional factor which may be supposed to be present, it can be said, therefore, that a severe conscience arises from the joint operation of two factors: the frustration of instinct, which unleashes aggressiveness, and the experience of being loved, which turns the aggressiveness inwards and hands it over to the super-ego.

It can also be asserted that when a child reacts to his first great instinctual frustrations with excessively strong aggressiveness and with a correspondingly severe super-ego, he is following a phylogenetic model and is going beyond the response that would be currently justified; for the father of prehistoric times was undoubtedly terrible, and an extreme amount of aggressiveness may be attributed to him. Thus, if one shifts over from individual to phylogenetic development, the differences between the two theories of the genesis of conscience are still further diminished. On the other hand, a new and important difference makes its appearance between these two developmental processes. We cannot get away from the assumption that man's sense of guilt springs from the Oedipus complex and was acquired at the killing of the father by the brothers banded together.[1] On that occasion an act of aggression was not suppressed but carried out; but it was the same act of aggression whose suppression in the child is supposed to be the source of his sense of guilt. At this point I should not be surprised if the reader were to exclaim angrily: 'So it makes no difference whether one kills one's father or not—one gets a feeling of guilt in either case! We may take leave to raise a few doubts here. Either it is not true that the sense of guilt comes from suppressed aggressiveness, or else the whole story of the killing of the father is a fiction and the children of primaeval man did not kill their fathers any more often than children do nowadays. Besides, if it is not fiction but a plausible piece of history, it would be a case of something happening which everyone expects to happen —namely, of a person feeling guilty because he really has done something which cannot be justified. And of this event, which is after all an everyday occurrence, psycho-analysis has not yet given any explanation.'

That is true, and we must make good the omission. Nor is there any great secret about the matter. When one has a sense of guilt after having committed a misdeed, and because of it, the feeling should more properly be called *remorse*. It relates only to a deed that has been done, and, of course, it presupposes that a *conscience*—the readiness to feel guilty—was already in existence before the deed took place. Remorse of this sort can, therefore, never help us to discover the origin of conscience and of the sense of guilt in general. What happens in these

[1] [*Totem and Taboo* (1912–13), *Standard Ed.*, **13**, 143.]

everyday cases is usually *this*: an *instinctual need acquires* the strength to achieve satisfaction in spite of the conscience, which is, after all, limited in its strength; and with the natural weakening of the need owing to its having been satisfied, the former balance of power is restored. Psycho-analysis is thus justified in excluding from the present discussion the case of a sense of guilt due to remorse, however frequently such cases occur and however great their practical importance.

But if the human sense of guilt goes back to the killing of the primal father, that was after all a case of 'remorse'. Are we to assume that [at that time] a conscience and a sense of guilt were not, as we have presupposed, in existence before the deed? If not, where, in this case, did the remorse come from? There is no doubt that this case should explain the secret of the sense of guilt to us and put an end to our difficulties. And I believe it does. This remorse was the result of the primordial ambivalence of feeling towards the father. His sons hated him, but they loved him, too. After their hatred had been satisfied by their act of aggression, their love came to the fore in their remorse for the deed. It set up the super-ego by identification with the father; it gave that agency the father's power, as though as a punishment for the deed of aggression they had carried out against him, and it created the restrictions which were intended to prevent a repetition of the deed. And since the inclination to aggressiveness against the father was repeated in the following generations, the sense of guilt, too, persisted, and it was reinforced once more by every piece of aggressiveness that was suppressed and carried over to the super-ego. Now, I think, we can at last grasp two things perfectly clearly: the part played by love in the origin of conscience and the fatal inevitability of the sense of guilt. Whether one has killed one's father or has abstained from doing so is not really the decisive thing. One is bound to feel guilty in either case, for the sense of guilt is an expression of the conflict due to ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between Eros and the instinct of destruction or death. This conflict is set going as soon as men are faced with the task of living together. So long as the community assumes no other form than that of the family, the conflict is bound to express itself in the Oedipus complex, to establish the conscience and to create the first sense of guilt. When an attempt is made to widen the community, the same conflict is continued in forms

which are dependent on the past; and it is strengthened and results in a further intensification of the sense of guilt. Since civilization obeys an internal erotic impulsion which causes human beings to unite in a closely-knit group, it can only achieve this aim through an ever-increasing reinforcement of the sense of guilt. What began in relation to the father is completed in relation to the group. If civilization is a necessary course of development from the family to humanity as a whole, then—as a result of the inborn conflict arising from ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between the trends of love and death—there is inextricably bound up with it an increase of the sense of guilt, which will perhaps reach heights that the individual finds hard to tolerate. One is reminded of the great poet's moving arraignment of the 'Heavenly Powers':—

> Ihr führt in's Leben uns hinein.
> Ihr lasst den Armen schuldig werden,
> Dann überlasst Ihr ihn den Pein,
> Denn iede Schuld rächt sich auf Erden.[1]

And we may well heave a sigh of relief at the thought that it is nevertheless vouchsafed to a few to salvage without effort from the whirlpool of their own feelings the deepest truths, towards which the rest of us have to find our way through tormenting uncertainty and with restless groping.

[1] One of the Harp-player's songs in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*.

> [To earth, this weary earth, ye bring us
> To guilt ye let us heedless go,
> Then leave repentance fierce to wring us:
> A moment's guilt, an age of woe!
> Carlyle's translation.

The first couplet appears as an association to a dream in Freud's short book *On Dreams* (1901*a*), *Standard Ed.*, 5, 637 and 639.]

## VIII

HAVING reached the end of his journey, the author must ask his readers' forgiveness for not having been a more skilful guide and for not having spared them empty stretches of road and troublesome *détours*. There is no doubt that it could have been done better. I will attempt, late in the day, to make some amends.

In the first place, I suspect that the reader has the impression that our discussions on the sense of guilt disrupt the framework of this essay: that they take up too much space, so that the rest of its subject-matter, with which they are not always closely connected, is pushed to one side. This may have spoilt the structure of my paper; but it corresponds faithfully to my intention to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization and to show that the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt.[1] Anything that still sounds strange about this statement, which is the final conclusion of our investigation, can probably be traced to the quite peculiar relationship—as yet completely unexplained—which the sense of guilt has to our consciousness. In the common case of remorse, which we regard as normal, this feeling makes itself clearly enough perceptible to consciousness. Indeed, we are accustomed to speak of a 'consciousness of guilt' instead of

[1] 'Thus conscience does make cowards of us all . . .'

That the education of young people at the present day conceals from them the part which sexuality will play in their lives is not the only reproach which we are obliged to make against it. Its other sin is that it does not prepare them for the aggressiveness of which they are destined to become the objects. In sending the young out into life with such a false psychological orientation, education is behaving as though one were to equip people starting on a Polar expedition with summer clothing and maps of the Italian Lakes. In this it becomes evident that a certain misuse is being made of ethical demands. The strictness of those demands would not do so much harm if education were to say: 'This is how men ought to be, in order to be happy and to make others happy; but you have to reckon on their not being like that.' Instead of this the young are made to believe that everyone else fulfils those ethical demands—that is, that everyone else is virtuous. It is on this that the demand is based that the young, too, shall become virtuous.

a 'sense of guilt'.[1] Our study of the neuroses, to which, after all, we owe the most valuable pointers to an understanding of normal conditions, brings us up against some contradictions. In one of those affections, obsessional neurosis, the sense of guilt makes itself noisily heard in consciousness; it dominates the clinical picture and the patient's life as well, and it hardly allows anything else to appear alongside of it. But in most other cases and forms of neurosis it remains completely unconscious, without on that account producing any less important effects. Our patients do not believe us when we attribute an 'unconscious sense of guilt' to them. In order to make ourselves at all intelligible to them, we tell them of an unconscious need for punishment, in which the sense of guilt finds expression. But its connection with a particular form of neurosis must not be over-estimated. Even in obsessional neurosis there are types of patients who are not aware of their sense of guilt, or who only feel it as a tormenting uneasiness, a kind of anxiety, if they are prevented from carrying out certain actions. It ought to be possible eventually to understand these things; but as yet we cannot. Here perhaps we may be glad to have it pointed out that the sense of guilt is at bottom nothing else but a topographical variety of anxiety; in its later phases it coincides completely with *fear of the super-ego*. And the relations of anxiety to consciousness exhibit the same extraordinary variations. Anxiety is always present somewhere or other behind every symptom; but at one time it takes noisy possession of the whole of consciousness, while at another it conceals itself so completely that we are obliged to speak of unconscious anxiety or, if we want to have a clearer psychological conscience, since anxiety is in the first instance simply a feeling,[2] of possibilities of anxiety. Consequently it is very conceivable that the sense of guilt produced by civilization is not perceived as such either, and remains to a large extent unconscious, or appears as a sort of *malaise*,[3] a

[1] ['*Schuldbewusstsein*' instead of '*Schuldgefühl*'. The second of these terms is the one which Freud has been using for the most part. They are synonyms apart from their literal meaning, and both are translated by the usual English 'sense of guilt' except on such special occasions as this.]

[2] [See Chapter VIII of *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 132.—Feelings cannot properly be described as 'unconscious' (cf. *The Ego and the Id*, *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 22–3).]

[3] ['*Unbehagen*': the word which appears in the title of this work.]

dissatisfaction, for which people seek other motivations. Religions, at any rate, have never overlooked the part played in civilization by a sense of guilt. Furthermore—a point which I failed to appreciate elsewhere[1]—they claim to redeem mankind from this sense of guilt, which they call sin. From the manner in which, in Christianity, this redemption is achieved—by the sacrificial death of a single person, who in this manner takes upon himself a guilt that is common to everyone—we have been able to infer what the first occasion may have been on which this primal guilt, which was also the beginning of civilization, was acquired.[2]

Though it cannot be of great importance, it may not be superfluous to elucidate the meaning of a few words such as 'super-ego', 'conscience', 'sense of guilt', 'need for punishment' and 'remorse', which we have often, perhaps, used too loosely and interchangeably. They all relate to the same state of affairs, but denote different aspects of it. The super-ego is an agency which has been inferred by us, and conscience is a function which we ascribe, among other functions, to that agency. This function consists in keeping a watch over the actions and intentions of the ego and judging them, in exercising a censorship. The sense of guilt, the harshness of the super-ego, is thus the same thing as the severity of the conscience. It is the perception which the ego has of being watched over in this way, the assessment of the tension between its own strivings and the demands of the super-ego. The fear of this critical agency (a fear which is at the bottom of the whole relationship), the need for punishment, is an instinctual manifestation on the part of the ego, which has become masochistic under the influence of a sadistic super-ego; it is a portion, that is to say, of the instinct towards internal destruction present in the ego, employed for forming an erotic attachment to the super-ego. We ought not to speak of a conscience until a super-ego is demonstrably present. As to a sense of guilt, we must admit that it is in existence before the super-ego, and therefore before conscience, too. At that time it is the immediate expression of fear of the external authority, a recognition of the tension between the ego and that authority. It is the direct derivative of the conflict between the need for the authority's love and the urge towards

[1] In *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*).

[2] *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13) [*Standard Ed.*, 13, 153–5].

instinctual satisfaction, whose inhibition produces the inclination to aggression. The superimposition of these two strata of the sense of guilt—one coming from fear of the *external* authority, the other from fear of the *internal* authority—has hampered our insight into the position of conscience in a number of ways. Remorse is a general term for the ego's reaction in a case of sense of guilt. It contains, in little altered form, the sensory material of the anxiety which is operating behind the sense of guilt; it is itself a punishment and can include the need for punishment. Thus remorse, too, can be older than conscience.

Nor will it do any harm if we once more review the contradictions which have for a while perplexed us during our enquiry. Thus, at one point the sense of guilt was the consequence of acts of aggression that had been abstained from; but at another point—and precisely at its historical beginning, the killing of the father—it was the consequence of an act of aggression that had been carried out [p. 131]. But a way out of this difficulty was found. For the institution of the internal authority, the super-ego, altered the situation radically. Before this, the sense of guilt coincided with remorse. (We may remark, incidentally, that the term 'remorse' should be reserved for the reaction after an act of aggression has actually been carried out.) After this, owing to the omniscience of the super-ego, the difference between an aggression intended and an aggression carried out lost its force. Henceforward a sense of guilt could be produced not only by an act of violence that is actually carried out (as all the world knows), but also by one that is merely intended (as psycho-analysis has discovered). Irrespectively of this alteration in the psychological situation, the conflict arising from ambivalence—the conflict between the two primal instincts—leaves the same result behind [p. 132]. We are tempted to look here for the solution of the problem of the varying relation in which the sense of guilt stands to consciousness. It might be thought that a sense of guilt arising from remorse for an evil *deed* must always be conscious, whereas a sense of guilt arising from the perception of an evil *impulse* may remain unconscious. But the answer is not so simple as that. Obsessional neurosis speaks energetically against it.

The second contradiction concerned the aggressive energy with which we suppose the super-ego to be endowed. According to one view, that energy merely carries on the punitive energy

of the external authority and keeps it alive in the mind [p. 123]; while, according to another view, it consists, on the contrary, of one's own aggressive energy which has not been used and which one now directs against that inhibiting authority [p. 129]. The first view seemed to fit in better with the *history*, and the second with the *theory*, of the sense of guilt. Closer reflection has resolved this apparently irreconcilable contradiction almost too completely; what remained as the essential and common factor was that in each case we were dealing with an aggressiveness which had been displaced inwards. Clinical observation, moreover, allows us in fact to distinguish two sources for the aggressiveness which we attribute to the super-ego; one or the other of them exercises the stronger effect in any given case, but as a general rule they operate in unison.

This is, I think, the place at which to put forward for serious consideration a view which I have earlier recommended for provisional acceptance.[1] In the most recent analytic literature a predilection is shown for the idea that any kind of frustration, any thwarted instinctual satisfaction, results, or may result, in a heightening of the sense of guilt.[2] A great theoretical simplification will, I think, be achieved if we regard this as applying only to the *aggressive* instincts, and little will be found to contradict this assumption. For how are we to account, on dynamic and economic grounds, for an increase in the sense of guilt appearing in place of an unfulfilled *erotic* demand? This only seems possible in a round-about way—if we suppose, that is, that the prevention of an erotic satisfaction calls up a piece of aggressiveness against the person who has interfered with the satisfaction, and that this aggressiveness has itself to be suppressed in turn. But if this is so, it is after all only the aggressiveness which is transformed into a sense of guilt, by being suppressed and made over to the super-ego. I am convinced that many processes will admit of a simpler and clearer exposition if the findings of psycho-analysis with regard to the derivation of the sense of guilt are restricted to the aggressive instincts. Examination of the clinical material gives us no unequivocal answer here, because, as our hypothesis tells us, the two classes of instinct hardly ever appear in a pure form,

[1] [It has not been possible to trace this earlier recommendation.]

[2] This view is taken in particular by Ernest Jones, Susan Isaacs and Melanie Klein; and also, I understand, by Reik and Alexander.

isolated from each other; but an investigation of extreme cases would probably point in the direction I anticipate.

I am tempted to extract a first advantage from this more restricted view of the case by applying it to the process of repression. As we have learned, neurotic symptoms are, in their essence, substitutive satisfactions for unfulfilled sexual wishes. In the course of our analytic work we have discovered to our surprise that perhaps every neurosis conceals a quota of unconscious sense of guilt, which in its turn fortifies the symptoms by making use of them as a punishment. It now seems plausible to formulate the following proposition. When an instinctual trend undergoes repression, its libidinal elements are turned into symptoms, and its aggressive components into a sense of guilt. Even if this proposition is only an average approximation to the truth, it is worthy of our interest.

Some readers of this work may further have an impression that they have heard the formula of the struggle between Eros and the death instinct too often. It was alleged to characterize the process of civilization which mankind undergoes [p. 122] but it was also brought into connection with the development of the individual [p. 119], and, in addition, it was said to have revealed the secret of organic life in general [p. 118f.]. We cannot, I think, avoid going into the relations of these three processes to one another. The repetition of the same formula is justified by the consideration that both the process of human civilization and of the development of the individual are also vital processes—which is to say that they must share in the most general characteristic of life. On the other hand, evidence of the presence of this general characteristic fails, for the very reason of its general nature, to help us to arrive at any differentiation [between the processes], so long as it is not narrowed down by special qualifications. We can only be satisfied, therefore, if we assert that the process of civilization is a modification which the vital process experiences under the influence of a task that is set it by Eros and instigated by Ananke—by the exigencies of reality; and that this task is one of uniting separate individuals into a community bound together by libidinal ties. When, however, we look at the relation between the process of human civilization and the developmental or educative process of individual human beings, we shall conclude without much

hesitation that the two are very similar in nature, if not the very same process applied to different kinds of object. The process of the civilization of the human species is, of course, an abstraction of a higher order than is the development of the individual and it is therefore harder to apprehend in concrete terms, nor should we pursue analogies to an obsessional extreme; but in view of the similarity between the aims of the two processes—in the one case the integration of a separate individual into a human group, and in the other case the creation of a unified group out of many individuals—we cannot be surprised at the similarity between the means employed and the resultant phenomena.

In view of its exceptional importance, we must not long postpone the mention of one feature which distinguishes between the two processes. In the developmental process of the individual, the programme of the pleasure principle, which consists in finding the satisfaction of happiness, is retained as the main aim. Integration in, or adaptation to, a human community appears as a scarcely avoidable condition which must be fulfilled before this aim of happiness can be achieved. If it could be done without that condition, it would perhaps be preferable. To put it in other words, the development of the individual seems to us to be a product of the interaction between two urges, the urge towards happiness, which we usually call 'egoistic', and the urge towards union with others in the community, which we call 'altruistic'. Neither of these descriptions goes much below the surface. In the process of individual development, as we have said, the main accent falls mostly on the egoistic urge (or the urge towards happiness); while the other urge, which may be described as a 'cultural' one, is usually content with the role of imposing restrictions. But in the process of civilization things are different. Here by far the most important thing is the aim of creating a unity out of the individual human beings. It is true that the aim of happiness is still there, but it is pushed into the background. It almost seems as if the creation of a great human community would be most successful if no attention had to be paid to the happiness of the individual. The developmental process of the individual can thus be expected to have special features of its own which are not reproduced in the process of human civilization. It is only in so far as the first of these processes has union

with the community as its aim that it need coincide with the second process.

Just as a planet revolves around a central body as well as rotating on its own axis, so the human individual takes part in the course of development of mankind at the same time as he pursues his own path in life. But to our dull eyes the play of forces in the heavens seems fixed in a never-changing order; in the field of organic life we can still see how the forces contend with one another, and how the effects of the conflict are continually changing. So, also, the two urges, the one towards personal happiness and the other towards union with other human beings, must struggle with each other in every individual; and so, also, the two processes of individual and of cultural development must stand in hostile opposition to each other and mutually dispute the ground. But this struggle between the individual and society is not a derivative of the contradiction—probably an irreconcilable one—between the primal instincts of Eros and death. It is a dispute within the economics of the libido, comparable to the contest concerning the distribution of libido between ego and objects; and it does admit of an eventual accommodation in the individual, as, it may be hoped, it will also do in the future of civilization, however much that civilization may oppress the life of the individual to-day.

The analogy between the process of civilization and the path of individual development may be extended in an important respect. It can be asserted that the community, too, evolves a super-ego under whose influence cultural development proceeds. It would be a tempting task for anyone who has a knowledge of human civilizations to follow out this analogy in detail. I will confine myself to bringing forward a few striking points. The super-ego of an epoch of civilization has an origin similar to that of an individual. It is based on the impression left behind by the personalities of great leaders—men of overwhelming force of mind or men in whom one of the human impulsions has found its strongest and purest, and therefore often its most one-sided, expression. In many instances the analogy goes still further, in that during their lifetime these figures were —often enough, even if not always—mocked and maltreated by others and even despatched in a cruel fashion. In the same way, indeed, the primal father did not attain divinity until

long after he had met his death by violence. The most arresting example of this fateful conjunction is to be seen in the figure of Jesus Christ—if, indeed, that figure is not a part of mythology, which called it into being from an obscure memory of that primal event. Another point of agreement between the cultural and the individual super-ego is that the former, just like the latter, sets up strict ideal demands, disobedience to which is visited with 'fear of conscience' [p. 128]. Here, indeed, we come across the remarkable circumstance that the mental processes concerned are actually more familiar to us and more accessible to consciousness as they are seen in the group than they can be in the individual man. In him, when tension arises, it is only the aggressiveness of the super-ego which, in the form of reproaches, makes itself noisily heard; its actual demands often remain unconscious in the background. If we bring them to conscious knowledge, we find that they coincide with the precepts of the prevailing cultural super-ego. At this point the two processes, that of the cultural development of the group and that of the cultural development of the individual, are, as it were, always interlocked. For that reason some of the manifestations and properties of the super-ego can be more easily detected in its behaviour in the cultural community than in the separate individual.

The cultural super-ego has developed its ideals and set up its demands. Among the latter, those which deal with the relations of human beings to one another are comprised under the heading of ethics. People have at all times set the greatest value on ethics, as though they expected that it in particular would produce especially important results. And it does in fact deal with a subject which can easily be recognized as the sorest spot in every civilization. Ethics is thus to be regarded as a therapeutic attempt—as an endeavour to achieve, by means of a command of the super-ego, something which has so far not been achieved by means of any other cultural activities. As we already know, the problem before us is how to get rid of the greatest hindrance to civilization—namely, the constitutional inclination of human beings to be aggressive towards one another; and for that very reason we are especially interested in what is probably the most recent of the cultural commands of the super-ego, the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself. [Cf. p. 109 ff. above.] In our research into, and therapy of, a neurosis, we are led to make two reproaches against the

super-ego of the individual. In the severity of its commands and prohibitions it troubles itself too little about the happiness of the ego, in that it takes insufficient account of the resistances against obeying them—of the instinctual strength of the id [in the first place], and of the difficulties presented by the real external environment [in the second]. Consequently we are very often obliged, for therapeutic purposes, to oppose the super-ego, and we endeavour to lower its demands. Exactly the same objections can be made against the ethical demands of the cultural super-ego. It, too, does not trouble itself enough about the facts of the mental constitution of human beings. It issues a command and does not ask whether it is possible for people to obey it. On the contrary, it assumes that a man's ego is psychologically capable of anything that is required of it, that his ego has unlimited mastery over his id. This is a mistake; and even in what are known as normal people the id cannot be controlled beyond certain limits. If more is demanded of a man, a revolt will be produced in him or a neurosis, or he will be made unhappy. The commandment, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', is the strongest defence against human aggressiveness and an excellent example of the unpsychological proceedings of the cultural super-ego. The commandment is impossible to fulfil; such an enormous inflation of love can only lower its value, not get rid of the difficulty. Civilization pays no attention to all this; it merely admonishes us that the harder it is to obey the precept the more meritorious it is to do so. But anyone who follows such a precept in present-day civilization only puts himself at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the person who disregards it. What a potent obstacle to civilization aggressiveness must be, if the defence against it can cause as much unhappiness as aggressiveness itself! 'Natural' ethics, as it is called, has nothing to offer here except the narcissistic satisfaction of being able to think oneself better than others. At this point the ethics based on religion introduces its promises of a better after-life. But so long as virtue is not rewarded here on earth, ethics will, I fancy, preach in vain. I too think it quite certain that a real change in the relations of human beings to possessions would be of more help in this direction than any ethical commands; but the recognition of this fact among socialists has been obscured and made useless for practical purposes by a fresh idealistic misconception of human nature. [Cf. p. 113 above.]

I believe the line of thought which seeks to trace in the phenomena of cultural development the part played by a super-ego promises still further discoveries. I hasten to come to a close. But there is one question which I can hardly evade. If the development of civilization has such a far-reaching similarity to the development of the individual and if it employs the same methods, may we not be justified in reaching the diagnosis that, under the influence of cultural urges, some civilizations, or some epochs of civilization—possibly the whole of mankind—have become 'neurotic'?[1] An analytic dissection of such neuroses might lead to therapeutic recommendations which could lay claim to great practical interest. I would not say that an attempt of this kind to carry psycho-analysis over to the cultural community was absurd or doomed to be fruitless. But we should have to be very cautious and not forget that, after all, we are only dealing with analogies and that it is dangerous, not only with men but also with concepts, to tear them from the sphere in which they have originated and been evolved. Moreover, the diagnosis of communal neuroses is faced with a special difficulty. In an individual neurosis we take as our starting-point the contrast that distinguishes the patient from his environment, which is assumed to be 'normal'. For a group all of whose members are affected by one and the same disorder no such background could exist; it would have to be found elsewhere. And as regards the therapeutic application of our knowledge, what would be the use of the most correct analysis of social neuroses, since no one possesses authority to impose such a therapy upon the group? But in spite of all these difficulties, we may expect that one day someone will venture to embark upon a pathology of cultural communities.

For a wide variety of reasons, it is very far from my intention to express an opinion upon the value of human civilization. I have endeavoured to guard myself against the enthusiastic prejudice which holds that our civilization is the most precious thing that we possess or could acquire and that its path will necessarily lead to heights of unimagined perfection. I can at least listen without indignation to the critic who is of the opinion that when one surveys the aims of cultural endeavour

[1] [Cf. some remarks in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*), p. 43 above.]

and the means it employs, one is bound to come to the conclusion that the whole effort is not worth the trouble, and that the outcome of it can only be a state of affairs which the individual will be unable to tolerate. My impartiality is made all the easier to me by my knowing very little about all these things. One thing only do I know for certain and that is that man's judgements of value follow directly his wishes for happiness—that, accordingly, they are an attempt to support his illusions with arguments. I should find it very understandable if someone were to point out the obligatory nature of the course of human civilization and were to say, for instance, that the tendencies to a restriction of sexual life or to the institution of a humanitarian ideal at the expense of natural selection were developmental trends which cannot be averted or turned aside and to which it is best for us to yield as though they were necessities of nature. I know, too, the objection that can be made against this, to the effect that in the history of mankind, trends such as these, which were considered unsurmountable, have often been thrown aside and replaced by other trends. Thus I have not the courage to rise up before my fellow-men as a prophet, and I bow to their reproach that I can offer them no consolation: for at bottom that is what they are all demanding —the wildest revolutionaries no less passionately than the most virtuous believers.

The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbance of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. It may be that in this respect precisely the present time deserves a special interest. Men have gained control over the forces of nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating one another to the last man. They know this, and hence comes a large part of their current unrest, their unhappiness and their mood of anxiety. And now it is to be expected that the other of the two 'Heavenly Powers' [p. 133], eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary. But who can foresee with what success and with what result?[1]

[1] [The final sentence was added in 1931—when the menace of Hitler was already beginning to be apparent.]

# FETISHISM
(1927)

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## FETISCHISMUS

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1927 *Almanach 1928*, 17–24.
1927 *Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, **13** (4), 373–8.
1928 *G.S.*, **11**, 395–401.
1931 *Sexualtheorie und Traumlehre*, 220–7.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 311–17.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

'Fetishism'

1928 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **9** (2), 161–6. (Tr. Joan Riviere.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 198–204. (Revised reprint of above.)

The present translation is a modified version of the one published in 1950.

This paper was finished at the end of the first week of August, 1927 (Jones, 1957, 146), and was published almost simultaneously the same autumn in the *Almanach 1928* and in the last issue of the *Zeitschrift* for 1927.

In his earliest discussion of fetishism, in the *Three Essays* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 153–5, Freud wrote that 'no other variation of the sexual instinct that borders on the pathological can lay so much claim to our interest as this one', and he in fact returned many times to a consideration of it. In this first account he did not go much further than maintaining that 'the choice of a fetish is an after-effect of some sexual impression, received as a rule in early childhood', and he left it at that in some passing comments on foot-fetishism in his study on *Gradiva* (1907*a*) a year or two later (ibid., **9**, 46–7). His next approach to the subject seems to have been in an unpublished paper 'On the Genesis of Fetishism', read to the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society on February 24, 1909 (Jones, 1955, 332); but we have unluckily not been given access to the Society's Minutes. At that time he was on the point of preparing the 'Rat Man'

analysis (1909*d*) for publication, and in it he mentioned a fresh point—the connection of fetishism with pleasure in smell (ibid., **10**, 247)—which he enlarged upon in a footnote added to the *Three Essays* in its second edition of 1910 (ibid., **7**, 155). But soon afterwards a new and more important connection must have occurred to him, for this same added footnote contained the first assertion that the fetish stands for the missing penis of the woman, which had figured prominently among the infantile sexual theories to which he had recently devoted a paper (1908*c*), ibid., **9**, 215–18. This new explanation of the fetish was also mentioned (as Freud remarks on p. 153*n*. below) in his study on Leonardo (1910*c*), ibid., **11**, 96, published very soon after the *Three Essays* footnote.

The special question of the origin of foot-fetishism (referred to in the present paper, p. 155 below) attracted Freud's attention a few years later. On March 11, 1914, he read another paper to the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society, on 'A Case of Foot-Fetishism'. This too remains unpublished, but this time we fortunately have a summary of it from Ernest Jones (1955, 342–3). The explanation of the choice of the foot as a fetish—approach to the woman's genitals from below—, which was arrived at there, was published in a further addition to the same footnote of the *Three Essays* in its third edition of 1915. Another similar case history was reported very briefly by Freud in Lecture XXII of his *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17). But though the present paper is of importance as bringing together and enlarging on Freud's earlier views on fetishism, its major interest lies in a very different direction—namely, in a fresh metapsychological development which it introduces. For several years past Freud had been using the concept of 'disavowal' ('*Verleugnung*') especially in relation to children's reactions to the observation of the anatomical distinction between the sexes.[1] And in the present paper, basing himself on fresh clinical observations, he puts forward reasons for supposing that this 'disavowal' necessarily implies a split in the subject's ego. At the end of his life Freud took up this question again and widened its scope: in an unfinished and posthumously

[1] See, for instance, the paper dealing explicitly with that subject (1925*j*) as well as the earlier ones on 'The Infantile Genital Organization' (1923*e*), 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924*c*) and 'The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis' (1924*e*).

published paper on 'Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence' (1940*e* [1938]) and in the last paragraphs of Chapter VIII of *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]). But though fetishism is specially considered in both these works, Freud there points out that this 'splitting of the ego' is not peculiar to fetishism but is in fact to be found in many other situations in which the ego is faced with the necessity of constructing a defence, and that it occurs not only in disavowal but also in repression.[1]

[1] It is perhaps not entirely fanciful to see a beginning of these ideas in a paper sent by Freud to Fliess on January 1, 1896 (Freud, 1950*a*, Draft K). In that paper Freud speaks of the final stage of the 'neuroses of defence' as involving a 'malformation' or 'alteration' of the ego. Something similar is even to be found still earlier, in the third section of the first paper on the neuro-psychoses of defence (1894*a*).

# FETISHISM

In the last few years I have had an opportunity of studying analytically a number of men whose object-choice was dominated by a fetish. There is no need to expect that these people came to analysis on account of their fetish. For though no doubt a fetish is recognized by its adherents as an abnormality, it is seldom felt by them as the symptom of an ailment accompanied by suffering. Usually they are quite satisfied with it, or even praise the way in which it eases their erotic life. As a rule, therefore, the fetish made its appearance in analysis as a subsidiary finding.

For obvious reasons the details of these cases must be withheld from publication; I cannot, therefore, show in what way accidental circumstances have contributed to the choice of a fetish. The most extraordinary case seemed to me to be one in which a young man had exalted a certain sort of 'shine on the nose' into a fetishistic precondition. The surprising explanation of this was that the patient had been brought up in an English nursery but had later come to Germany, where he forgot his mother-tongue almost completely. The fetish, which originated from his earliest childhood, had to be understood in English, not German. The 'shine on the nose' [in German '*Glanz auf der Nase*']—was in reality a '*glance* at the nose'. The nose was thus the fetish, which, incidentally, he endowed at will with the luminous shine which was not perceptible to others.

In every instance, the meaning and the purpose of the fetish turned out, in analysis, to be the same. It revealed itself so naturally and seemed to me so compelling that I am prepared to expect the same solution in all cases of fetishism. When now I announce that the fetish is a substitute for the penis, I shall certainly create disappointment; so I hasten to add that it is not a substitute for any chance penis, but for a particular and quite special penis that had been extremely important in early childhood but had later been lost. That is to say, it should normally have been given up, but the fetish is precisely designed to preserve it from extinction. To put it more plainly: the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little

boy once believed in and—for reasons familiar to us—does not want to give up.[1]

What happened, therefore, was that the boy refused to take cognizance of the fact of his having perceived that a woman does not possess a penis. No, that could not be true: for if a woman had been castrated, then his own possession of a penis was in danger; and against that there rose in rebellion the portion of his narcissism which Nature has, as a precaution, attached to that particular organ. In later life a grown man may perhaps experience a similar panic when the cry goes up that Throne and Altar are in danger, and similar illogical consequences will ensue. If I am not mistaken, Laforgue would say in this case that the boy 'scotomizes' his perception of the woman's lack of a penis.[2] A new technical term is justified when it describes a new fact or emphasizes it. This is not so here. The oldest word in our psycho-analytic terminology, 'repression', already relates to this pathological process. If we wanted to differentiate more sharply between the vicissitude of the *idea* as distinct from that of the *affect*,[3] and reserve the word '*Verdrängung*' ['repression'] for the affect, then the correct German word for the vicissitude of the idea would be '*Verleugnung*' ['disavowal'].[4] 'Scotomization' seems to me particularly unsuitable, for it suggests that the perception is entirely wiped

[1] This interpretation was made as early as 1910, in my study on Leonardo da Vinci, without any reasons being given for it. [*Standard Ed.*, **11**, 96. Cf. Editor's Note above, p. 150.]

[2] I correct myself, however, by adding that I have the best reasons for supposing that Laforgue would not say anything of the sort. It is clear from his own remarks [Laforgue, 1926] that 'scotomization' is a term which derives from descriptions of dementia praecox, which does not arise from a carrying-over of psycho-analytic concepts to the psychoses and which has no application to developmental processes or to the formation of neuroses. In his exposition in the text of his paper, the author has been at pains to make this incompatibility clear.

[3] [Cf. 'Repression' (1915*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 152f. and the Appendix to the first paper on the neuro-psychoses of defence (1894*a*).]

[4] [Some discussion of Freud's use of this term and of the English rendering of it appears in an Editor's footnote to the paper on 'The Infantile Genital Organization' (1923*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 143. It may be remarked that in Chapter VIII of the *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]) Freud makes a different distinction between the uses of the two words: 'repression' applies to defence against internal instinctual demands and 'disavowal' to defence against the claims of external reality.]

out, so that the result is the same as when a visual impression falls on the blind spot in the retina. In the situation we are considering, on the contrary, we see that the perception has persisted, and that a very energetic action has been undertaken to maintain the disavowal. It is not true that, after the child has made his observation of the woman, he has preserved unaltered his belief that women have a phallus. He has retained that belief, but he has also given it up. In the conflict between the weight of the unwelcome perception and the force of his counter-wish, a compromise has been reached, as is only possible under the dominance of the unconscious laws of thought—the primary processes. Yes, in his mind the woman *has* got a penis, in spite of everything; but this penis is no longer the same as it was before. Something else has taken its place, has been appointed its substitute, as it were, and now inherits the interest which was formerly directed to its predecessor. But this interest suffers an extraordinary increase as well, because the horror of castration has set up a memorial to itself in the creation of this substitute. Furthermore, an aversion, which is never absent in any fetishist, to the real female genitals remains a *stigma indelebile* of the repression that has taken place. We can now see what the fetish achieves and what it is that maintains it. It remains a token of triumph over the threat of castration and a protection against it. It also saves the fetishist from becoming a homosexual, by endowing women with the characteristic which makes them tolerable as sexual objects. In later life, the fetishist feels that he enjoys yet another advantage from his substitute for a genital. The meaning of the fetish is not known to other people, so the fetish is not withheld from him: it is easily accessible and he can readily obtain the sexual satisfaction attached to it. What other men have to woo and make exertions for can be had by the fetishist with no trouble at all.

Probably no male human being is spared the fright of castration at the sight of a female genital. Why some people become homosexual as a consequence of that impression, while others fend it off by creating a fetish, and the great majority surmount it, we are frankly not able to explain. It is possible that, among all the factors at work, we do not yet know those which are decisive for the rare pathological results. We must be content if we can explain what has happened, and may for the

present leave on one side the task of explaining why something has *not* happened.

One would expect that the organs or objects chosen as substitutes for the absent female phallus would be such as appear as symbols of the penis in other connections as well. This may happen often enough, but is certainly not a deciding factor. It seems rather that when the fetish is instituted some process occurs which reminds one of the stopping of memory in traumatic amnesia. As in this latter case, the subject's interest comes to a halt half-way, as it were; it is as though the last impression before the uncanny and traumatic one is retained as a fetish. Thus the foot or shoe owes its preference as a fetish—or a part of it—to the circumstance that the inquisitive boy peered at the woman's genitals from below, from her legs up;[1] fur and velvet—as has long been suspected—are a fixation of the sight of the pubic hair, which should have been followed by the longed-for sight of the female member; pieces of underclothing, which are so often chosen as a fetish, crystallize the moment of undressing, the last moment in which the woman could still be regarded as phallic. But I do not maintain that it is invariably possible to discover with certainty how the fetish was determined.

An investigation of fetishism is strongly recommended to anyone who still doubts the existence of the castration complex or who can still believe that fright at the sight of the female genital has some other ground—for instance, that it is derived from a supposed recollection of the trauma of birth.[2]

For me, the explanation of fetishism had another point of theoretical interest as well. Recently, along quite speculative lines, I arrived at the proposition that the essential difference between neurosis and psychosis was that in the former the ego, in the service of reality, suppresses a piece of the id, whereas in a psychosis it lets itself be induced by the id to detach itself from a piece of reality. I returned to this theme once again later on.[3] But soon after this I had reason to regret that I had ventured so far. In the analysis of two young men I learned that each—one when he was two years old and the other when he was ten—had failed to take cognizance of the death of his

[1] [Cf. Editor's Note, p. 150 above.] [2] [Cf. Rank, 1924, 22–4.]

[3] 'Neurosis and Psychosis' (1924*b*) and 'The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis' (1924*e*).

beloved father—had 'scotomized' it—and yet neither of them had developed a psychosis. Thus a piece of reality which was undoubtedly important had been disavowed by the ego, just as the unwelcome fact of women's castration is disavowed in fetishists. I also began to suspect that similar occurrences in childhood are by no means rare, and I believed that I had been guilty of an error in my characterization of neurosis and psychosis. It is true that there was one way out of the difficulty. My formula needed only to hold good where there was a higher degree of differentiation in the psychical apparatus; things might be permissible to a child which would entail severe injury to an adult.

But further research led to another solution of the contradiction. It turned out that the two young men had no more 'scotomized' their father's death than a fetishist does the castration of women. It was only one current in their mental life that had not recognized their father's death; there was another current which took full account of that fact. The attitude which fitted in with the wish and the attitude which fitted in with reality existed side by side. In one of my two cases this split had formed the basis of a moderately severe obsessional neurosis. The patient oscillated in every situation in life between two assumptions: the one, that his father was still alive and was hindering his activities; the other, opposite one, that he was entitled to regard himself as his father's successor. I may thus keep to the expectation that in a psychosis the one current—that which fitted in with reality—would have in fact been absent.

Returning to my description of fetishism, I may say that there are many and weighty additional proofs of the divided attitude of fetishists to the question of the castration of women. In very subtle instances both the disavowal and the affirmation of the castration have found their way into the construction of the fetish itself. This was so in the case of a man whose fetish was an athletic support-belt which could also be worn as bathing drawers. This piece of clothing covered up the genitals entirely and concealed the distinction between them. Analysis showed that it signified that women were castrated and that they were not castrated; and it also allowed of the hypothesis that men were castrated, for all these possibilities could equally well be concealed under the belt—the earliest rudiment of

which in his childhood had been the fig-leaf on a statue. A fetish of this sort, doubly derived from contrary ideas, is of course especially durable. In other instances the divided attitude shows itself in what the fetishist does with his fetish, whether in reality or in his imagination. To point out that he reveres his fetish is not the whole story; in many cases he treats it in a way which is obviously equivalent to a representation of castration. This happens particularly if he has developed a strong identification with his father and plays the part of the latter; for it is to him that as a child he ascribed the woman's castration. Affection and hostility in the treatment of the fetish —which run parallel with the disavowal and the acknowledgment of castration—are mixed in unequal proportions in different cases, so that the one or the other is more clearly recognizable. We seem here to approach an understanding, even if a distant one, of the behaviour of the '*coupeur de nattes*'.[1] In him the need to carry out the castration which he disavows has come to the front. His action contains in itself the two mutually incompatible assertions: 'the woman has still got a penis' and 'my father has castrated the woman'. Another variant, which is also a parallel to fetishism in social psychology, might be seen in the Chinese custom of mutilating the female foot and then revering it like a fetish after it has been mutilated. It seems as though the Chinese male wants to thank the woman for having submitted to being castrated.

In conclusion we may say that the normal prototype of fetishes is a man's penis, just as the normal prototype of inferior organs is a woman's real small penis, the clitoris.[2]

[1] [A pervert who enjoys cutting off the hair of females. Part of the present explanation was given by Freud in his study of Leonardo (1910*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **11**, 96.]

[2] [This is an allusion to Adler's insistence on 'organ-inferiority' as the basis of all neuroses. Cf. a footnote to the paper on 'Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1925*j*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 253–4, and a longer discussion in Lecture XXXI of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*).]

# HUMOUR
(1927)

## DER HUMOR

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1927 *Almanach 1928*, 9–16.
1928 *Imago*, **14** (1), 1–6.
1928 *G.S.*, **11**, 402–8.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 383–9.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

'Humour'

1928 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **9** (1), 1–6. (Tr. Joan Riviere.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 215–21. (Revised reprint of above.)

The present translation is a corrected version of that published in 1950.

Freud wrote this paper in five days during the second week of August, 1927 (Jones, 1957, 146), and it was read on his behalf by Anna Freud on September 1, before the Tenth International Psycho-Analytical Congress at Innsbruck. It was first published in the autumn of the same year in the psycho-analytic 'Almanac' for 1928.

The paper returns, after an interval of more than twenty years, to the subject discussed in the last section of the book on *Jokes* (1905*c*). Freud now considers it in the light of his new structural picture of the human mind. Some interesting metapsychological points emerge in the later pages of the paper, and for the first time we find the super-ego presented in an amiable mood.

# HUMOUR

In my volume on *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905*c*), I in fact considered humour only from the economic point of view. My object was to discover the source of the pleasure obtained from humour, and I think I was able to show that the yield of humorous pleasure arises from an economy in expenditure upon feeling. [*Standard Ed.*, 8, 236.]

There are two ways in which the humorous process can take place. It may take place in regard to a single person, who himself adopts the humorous attitude, while a second person plays the part of the spectator who derives enjoyment from it; or it may take place between two persons, of whom one takes no part at all in the humorous process, but is made the object of humorous contemplation by the other. When, to take the crudest example [ibid., 229], a criminal who was being led out to the gallows on a Monday remarked: 'Well, the week's beginning nicely', he was producing the humour himself; the humorous process is completed in his own person and obviously affords him a certain sense of satisfaction. I, the non-participating listener, am affected as it were at long-range by this humorous production of the criminal's; I feel, like him, perhaps, the yield of humorous pleasure.

We have an instance of the second way in which humour arises when a writer or a narrator describes the behaviour of real or imaginary people in a humorous manner. There is no need for those people to display any humour themselves; the humorous attitude is solely the business of the person who is taking them as his object; and, as in the former instance, the reader or hearer shares in the enjoyment of the humour. To sum up, then, we can say that the humorous attitude—whatever it may consist in—can be directed either towards the subject's own self or towards other people; it is to be assumed that it brings a yield of pleasure to the person who adopts it, and a similar yield of pleasure falls to the share of the non-participating onlooker.

We shall best understand the genesis of the yield of humorous pleasure if we consider the process in the listener before whom someone else produces humour. He sees this other person in a

situation which leads the listener to expect that the other will produce the signs of an affect—that he will get angry, complain, express pain, be frightened or horrified or perhaps even in despair; and the onlooker or listener is prepared to follow his lead and to call up the same emotional impulses in himself. But this emotional expectancy is disappointed; the other person expresses no affect, but makes a jest. The expenditure on feeling that is economized turns into humorous pleasure in the listener.

It is easy to get so far. But we soon tell ourselves that it is the process which takes place in the other person—the 'humorist'—that merits the greater attention. There is no doubt that the essence of humour is that one spares oneself the affects to which the situation would naturally give rise and dismisses the possibility of such expressions of emotion with a jest. As far as this goes, the process in the humorist must tally with the process in the hearer—or, to put it more correctly, the process in the hearer must have copied the one in the humorist. But how does the latter bring about the mental attitude which makes a release of affect superfluous? What are the dynamics of his adoption of the 'humorous attitude'? Clearly, the solution of the problem is to be sought in the humorist; in the hearer we must assume that there is only an echo, a copy, of this unknown process.

It is now time to acquaint ourselves with a few of the characteristics of humour. Like jokes and the comic, humour has something liberating about it; but it also has something of grandeur and elevation, which is lacking in the other two ways of obtaining pleasure from intellectual activity. The grandeur in it clearly lies in the triumph of narcissism, the victorious assertion of the ego's invulnerability. The ego refuses to be distressed by the provocations of reality, to let itself be compelled to suffer. It insists that it cannot be affected by the traumas of the external world; it shows, in fact, that such traumas are no more than occasions for it to gain pleasure. This last feature is a quite essential element of humour. Let us suppose that the criminal who was being led to execution on Monday had said: 'It doesn't worry me. What does it matter, after all, if a fellow like me is hanged? The world won't come to an end because of it.' We should have to admit that such a speech does in fact display the same magnificent superiority over the real situation. It is wise and true; but it does not betray

a trace of humour. Indeed, it is based on an appraisal of reality which runs directly counter to the appraisal made by humour. Humour is not resigned; it is rebellious. It signifies not only the triumph of the ego but also of the pleasure principle, which is able here to assert itself against the unkindness of the real circumstances.

These last two features—the rejection of the claims of reality and the putting through of the pleasure principle—bring humour near to the regressive or reactionary processes which engage our attention so extensively in psychopathology. Its fending off of the possibility of suffering places it among the great series of methods which the human mind has constructed in order to evade the compulsion to suffer—a series which begins with neurosis and culminates in madness and which includes intoxication, self-absorption and ecstasy.[1] Thanks to this connection, humour possesses a dignity which is wholly lacking, for instance, in jokes, for jokes either serve simply to obtain a yield of pleasure or place the yield of pleasure that has been obtained in the service of aggression. In what, then, does the humorous attitude consist, an attitude by means of which a person refuses to suffer, emphasizes the invincibility of his ego by the real world, victoriously maintains the pleasure principle —and all this, in contrast to other methods having the same purposes, without overstepping the bounds of mental health? The two achievements seem incompatible.

If we turn to the situation in which one person adopts a humorous attitude towards others, a view which I have already put forward tentatively in my book on jokes will at once suggest itself. This is that the subject is behaving towards them as an adult does towards a child when he recognizes and smiles at the triviality of interests and sufferings which seem so great to it [ibid., 233–4]. Thus the humorist would acquire his superiority by assuming the role of the grown-up and identifying himself to some extent with his father, and reducing the other people to being children. This view probably covers the facts, but it hardly seems a conclusive one. One asks oneself what it is that makes the humorist arrogate this role to himself.

[1] [Cf. the subsequent long discussion of these various methods of avoiding pain in Chapter II of *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), p. 77 ff. above. But Freud had already pointed out the defensive function of humour in *Jokes* (1905*c*), *Standard Ed.*, 8, 233.]

But we must recall the other, probably more primary and important, situation of humour, in which a person adopts a humorous attitude towards himself in order to ward off possible suffering. Is there any sense in saying that someone is treating himself like a child and is at the same time playing the part of a superior adult towards that child?

This not very plausible idea receives strong support, I think, if we consider what we have learned from pathological observations on the structure of the ego. This ego is not a simple entity. It harbours within it, as its nucleus, a special agency—the super-ego.[1] Sometimes it is merged with the super-ego so that we cannot distinguish between them, whereas in other circumstances it is sharply differentiated from it. Genetically the super-ego is the heir to the parental agency. It often keeps the ego in strict dependence and still really treats it as the parents, or the father, once treated the child, in its early years. We obtain a dynamic explanation of the humorous attitude, therefore, if we assume that it consists in the humorist's having withdrawn the psychical accent from his ego and having transposed it on to his super-ego. To the super-ego, thus inflated, the ego can appear tiny and all its interests trivial; and, with this new distribution of energy, it may become an easy matter for the super-ego to suppress the ego's possibilities of reacting.

In order to remain faithful to our customary phraseology, we shall have to speak, not of transposing the psychical accent, but of displacing large amounts of cathexis. The question then is whether we are entitled to picture extensive displacements like this from one agency of the mental apparatus to another. It looks like a new hypothesis constructed *ad hoc*. Yet we may remind ourselves that we have repeatedly (even though not sufficiently often) taken a factor of this kind into account in our attempts at a metapsychological picture of mental events. Thus, for instance, we supposed that the difference between an ordinary erotic object-cathexis and the state of being in love is that in the latter incomparably more cathexis passes over to the object and that the ego empties itself as it were in favour of the

[1] [It may be remarked that in a footnote at the beginning of Chapter III of *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*) Freud says that 'the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* alone can be regarded as the nucleus of the ego' (*Standard Ed.*, 19 28).]

object.[1] In studying some cases of paranoia I was able to establish the fact that ideas of persecution are formed early and exist for a long time without any perceptible effect, until, as the result of some particular precipitating event, they receive sufficient amounts of cathexis to cause them to become dominant.[2] The cure, too, of such paranoic attacks would lie not so much in a resolution and correction of the delusional ideas as in a withdrawal from them of the cathexis which has been lent to them. The alternations between melancholia and mania, between a cruel suppression of the ego by the super-ego and a liberation of the ego after that pressure, suggests a shift of cathexis of this kind;[3] such a shift, moreover, would have to be brought in to explain a whole number of phenomena belonging to normal mental life. If this has been done hitherto only to a very limited extent, that is on account of our usual caution—something which deserves only praise. The region in which we feel secure is that of the pathology of mental life; it is here that we make our observations and acquire our convictions. For the present we venture to form a judgement on the normal mind only in so far as we can discern what is normal in the isolations and distortions of the pathological material. When once we have overcome this hesitancy we shall recognize what a large contribution is made to the understanding of mental processes by the static conditions as well as by the dynamic changes in the *quantity* of energic cathexis.

I think, therefore, that the possibility I have suggested here, that in a particular situation the subject suddenly hypercathects his super-ego and then, proceeding from it, alters the reactions of the ego, is one which deserves to be retained. Moreover, what I have suggested about humour finds a remarkable analogy in the kindred field of jokes. As regards the origin of jokes I was led to assume that a preconscious thought is given over for a moment to unconscious revision [ibid., 166]. A joke is thus the contribution made to the comic by the unconscious [ibid., 208]. In just the same way, *humour would be the contribution made to the comic through the agency of the super-ego.*

[1] [See Chapter VIII of *Group Psychology* (1921*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 112–13.]

[2] [See Section B of 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms' (1922*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 228–9.]

[3] [See 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 253–5.]

In other connections we knew the super-ego as a severe master. It will be said that it accords ill with such a character that the super-ego should condescend to enabling the ego to obtain a small yield of pleasure. It is true that humorous pleasure never reaches the intensity of the pleasure in the comic or in jokes, that it never finds vent in hearty laughter. It is also true that, in bringing about the humorous attitude, the super-ego is actually repudiating reality and serving an illusion. But (without rightly knowing why) we regard this less intense pleasure as having a character of very high value; we feel it to be especially liberating and elevating. Moreover, the jest made by humour is not the essential thing. It has only the value of a preliminary. The main thing is the intention which humour carries out, whether it is acting in relation to the self or other people. It means: 'Look! here is the world, which seems so dangerous! It is nothing but a game for children—just worth making a jest about!'

If it is really the super-ego which, in humour, speaks such kindly words of comfort to the intimidated ego, this will teach us that we have still a great deal to learn about the nature of the super-ego. Furthermore, not everyone is capable of the humorous attitude. It is a rare and precious gift, and many people are even without the capacity to enjoy humorous pleasure that is presented to them. And finally, if the super-ego tries, by means of humour, to console the ego and protect it from suffering, this does not contradict its origin in the parental agency.

# A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE
(1928 [1927])

## EIN RELIGIÖSES ERLEBNIS

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1928 *Imago*, **14** (1), 7–10.
1928 *G.S.*, **11**, 467–70.
1928 *Almanach 1929*, 9–12.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 393–6.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:

'A Religious Experience'

1929 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **10** (1), 1–4. (Translator unspecified.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 243–6. (Tr. James Strachey.)

The present translation is a very slightly corrected reprint of the one published in 1950.

This paper, published early in 1928, was written, according to Ernest Jones (1957, 151), at the end of 1927. Viereck's visit to Freud which was the starting-point of the events leading to the writing of the paper took place, as Jones tells us (ibid., 133), in late June of 1926. Viereck (a fairly well known American journalist who had an interest in psycho-analysis) published his account of the visit in the autumn of the following year. It was reprinted in a volume, *Glimpses of the Great* (1930, 28 ff.), and some extracts from it are given by Jones (loc. cit.).

It may be noticed that the text of the letter from the American doctor to Freud does not agree exactly with the German version. The English version given here is a reprint of that given originally in the *International Journal*, and there is reason to suppose that its editors used a copy of the English autograph of the letter, of which Freud had not given a quite exact rendering. The differences between the two versions are, however, trivial.

# A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

In the autumn of 1927, G. S. Viereck, a German-American journalist who had paid me a welcome visit, published an account of a conversation with me, in the course of which he mentioned my lack of religious faith and my indifference on the subject of survival after death. This 'interview', as it was called, was widely read and brought me, among others, the following letter from an American physician:[1]

'. . . What struck me most was your answer to the question whether you believe in a survival of personality after death. You are reported as having said: "I give no thought to the matter."

'I am writing now to tell you of an experience that I had in the year I graduated at the University of X. One afternoon while I was passing through the dissecting-room my attention was attracted to a sweet-faced dear old woman who was being carried to a dissecting-table. This sweet-faced woman made such an impression on me that a thought flashed up in my mind: "There is no God: if there were a God he would not have allowed this dear old woman to be brought into the dissecting-room."

'When I got home that afternoon the feeling I had had at the sight in the dissecting-room had determined me to discontinue going to church. The doctrines of Christianity had before this been the subject of doubts in my mind.

'While I was meditating on this matter a voice spoke to my soul that "I should consider the step I was about to take". My spirit replied to this inner voice by saying, "If I knew of a certainty that Christianity was truth and the Bible was the Word of God, then I would accept it."

'In the course of the next few days God made it clear to my soul that the Bible was His Word, that the teachings about Jesus Christ were true, and that Jesus was our only hope. After such a clear revelation I accepted the Bible as God's Word and Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. Since then God has revealed Himself to me by many infallible proofs.

[1] [See Editor's Note on previous page.]

'I beg you as a brother physician to give thought to this most important matter, and I can assure you, if you look into this subject with an open mind, God will reveal the *truth* to your soul, the same as he did to me and to multitudes of others. . . .'

I sent a polite answer, saying that I was glad to hear that this experience had enabled him to retain his faith. As for myself, God had not done so much for me. He had never allowed me to hear an inner voice; and if, in view of my age, he did not make haste, it would not be my fault if I remained to the end of my life what I now was—'an infidel Jew'.[1]

In the course of a friendly reply, my colleague gave me an assurance that being a Jew was not an obstacle in the pathway to true faith and proved this by several instances. His letter culminated in the information that prayers were being earnestly addressed to God that he might grant me 'faith to believe'.[1]

I am still awaiting the outcome of this intercession. In the meantime, my colleague's religious experience provides food for thought. It seems to me to demand some attempt at an interpretation based upon emotional motives; for his experience is puzzling in itself and is based on particularly bad logic. God, as we know, allows horrors to take place of a kind very different from the removal to a dissecting-room of the dead body of a pleasant-looking old woman. This has been true at all times, and it must have been so while my American colleague was pursuing his studies. Nor, as a medical student, can he have been so sheltered from the world as to have known nothing of such evils. Why was it, then, that his indignation against God broke out precisely when he received this particular impression in the dissecting-room?

For anyone who is accustomed to regard men's internal experiences and actions analytically the explanation is very obvious—so obvious that it actually crept into my recollections of the facts themselves. Once, when I was referring to my pious colleague's letter in the course of a discussion, I spoke of his having written that the dead woman's face had reminded him of his own mother. In fact these words were not in his letter, and a moment's reflection will show that they could not possibly have been. But that is the explanation irresistibly forced on us by his affectionately phrased description of the 'sweet-faced

[1] [In English in the original.]

dear old woman'.[1] Thus the weakness of judgement displayed by the young doctor is to be accounted for by the emotion roused in him by the memory of his mother. It is difficult to escape from the bad psycho-analytic habit of bringing forward as evidence details which also allow of more superficial explanations—and I am tempted to recall the fact that my colleague addressed me later as a 'brother physician'.[1]

We may suppose, therefore, that this was the way in which things happened. The sight of a woman's dead body, naked or on the point of being stripped, reminded the young man of his mother. It roused in him a longing for his mother which sprang from his Oedipus complex, and this was immediately completed by a feeling of indignation against his father. His ideas of 'father' and 'God' had not yet become widely separated; so that his desire to destroy his father could become conscious as doubt in the existence of God and could seek to justify itself in the eyes of reason as indignation about the ill-treatment of a mother-object. It is of course typical for a child to regard what his father does to his mother in sexual intercourse as ill-treatment. The new impulse, which was displaced into the sphere of religion, was only a repetition of the Oedipus situation and consequently soon met with a similar fate. It succumbed to a powerful opposing current. During the actual conflict the level of displacement was not maintained: there is no mention of arguments in justification of God, nor are we told what the infallible signs were by which God proved his existence to the doubter. The conflict seems to have been unfolded in the form of a hallucinatory psychosis: inner voices were heard which uttered warnings against resistance to God. But the outcome of the struggle was displayed once again in the sphere of religion and it was of a kind predetermined by the fate of the Oedipus complex: complete submission to the will of God the Father. The young man became a believer and accepted everything he had been taught since his childhood about God and Jesus Christ. He had had a religious experience and had undergone a conversion.

All of this is so simple and straightforward that we cannot but ask ourselves whether by understanding this case we have thrown any light at all on the psychology of conversion in general. I may refer the reader to an admirable volume on the

[1] [In English in the original.]

subject by Sante de Sanctis (1924), which incidentally takes all the findings of psycho-analysis into account. Study of this work confirms our expectation that by no means every case of conversion can be understood so easily as this one. In no respect, however, does our case contradict the views arrived at on the subject by modern research. The point which our present observation throws into relief is the manner in which the conversion was attached to a particular determining event, which caused the subject's scepticism to flare up for a last time before being finally extinguished.

# DOSTOEVSKY AND PARRICIDE
(1928 [1927])

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## DOSTOJEWSKI UND DIE VATERTÖTUNG

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1928 In *Die Urgestalt der Brüder Karamasoff*, ed. R. Fülöp-Miller and F. Eckstein, Munich. Pp. xi–xxxvi.
1929 *Almanach 1930*, 9–31.
1934 *G.S.*, **12**, 7–26.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 399–418.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:

'Dostoevski and Parricide'

1929 *The Realist*, **1** (4), 18–33. (Tr. D. F. Tait.)

'Dostoevsky and Parricide'

1945 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **26** (1 & 2), 1–8. (The above very considerably revised and with a slightly modified title.)
1945 *Partisan Review*, **12** (4), 530–44. (Reprint of above.)
1947 In F. M. Dostoevsky, *Stavrogin's Confession*, trans. V. Woolf and Koteliansky, New York: Lear Publications., 87–114. (Reprint of above.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 222–42. (Further revision of above.)

The present translation is a very slightly corrected reprint of that of 1950.

From 1925 onwards, Fülöp-Miller and Eckstein began issuing a series of volumes supplementary to the great complete German edition of Dostoevsky which, edited by Moeller van den Bruck, had been completed a few years earlier. The new volumes, uniform with the complete edition, contained posthumous writings, unfinished drafts and material from various sources throwing light on Dostoevsky's character and works. One of these volumes was to contain a collection of preliminary drafts and sketches relating to *The Brothers Karamazov* and a discussion of the book's sources; and the editors were anxious to

persuade Freud to contribute an introduction dealing with the psychology both of the book and of its author. They seem to have approached him early in 1926 and he had begun writing his essay by the end of June of that year. He was deflected from it, however, by the urgent necessity for producing his pamphlet on lay analysis (*1926e*) in view of the proceedings which had been begun against Theodor Reik (*Standard Ed.*, **20**, 180). Thereafter he seems to have lost interest in the Dostoevsky essay, particularly, as Ernest Jones tells us (1957, 152), after he had come across a book on the same subject by Neufeld (1923), which, as he says in a footnote (p. 194)—with considerable modesty, it must be remarked—, contained most of the ideas that he himself was putting forward. It is not clear when he took the essay up again. Jones (loc. cit.) suggests that it was finished early in 1927; but this seems scarcely likely, since Stefan Zweig's story with which the later part of the essay is concerned only appeared in 1927. The volume to which Freud's essay served as an introduction (*The Original Version of the Brothers Karamazov*) was not published until the autumn of 1928.

The essay falls into two distinct parts. The first deals with Dostoevsky's character in general, with his masochism, his sense of guilt, his 'epileptoid' attacks and his double attitude in the Oedipus complex. The second discusses the special point of his passion for gambling and leads to an account of a short story by Stefan Zweig which throws light on the genesis of that addiction. As will be seen from a subsequent letter of Freud's to Theodor Reik which we print as an appendix (p. 195), the two parts of the essay are more closely related than appears on the surface.

The present essay may show signs of being an 'occasional' piece, but it contains much that is of interest—for instance, Freud's first discussion of hysterical attacks since his early paper on the subject written twenty years before (*1909a*), a restatement of his later views on the Oedipus complex and the sense of guilt, and a sidelight on the problem of masturbation which is not to be found in his earlier account of the question (*1912f*). But above all, he had an opportunity here for expressing his views on a writer whom he placed in the very front rank of all.

# DOSTOEVSKY AND PARRICIDE

FOUR facets may be distinguished in the rich personality of Dostoevsky: the creative artist, the neurotic, the moralist and the sinner. How is one to find one's way in this bewildering complexity?

The creative artist is the least doubtful: Dostoevsky's place is not far behind Shakespeare. *The Brothers Karamazov* is the most magnificent novel ever written; the episode of the Grand Inquisitor, one of the peaks in the literature of the world, can hardly be valued too highly. Before the problem of the creative artist analysis must, alas, lay down its arms.

The moralist in Dostoevsky is the most readily assailable. If we seek to rank him high as a moralist on the plea that only a man who has gone through the depths of sin can reach the highest summit of morality, we are neglecting a doubt that arises. A moral man is one who reacts to temptation as soon as he feels it in his heart, without yielding to it. A man who alternately sins and then in his remorse erects high moral standards lays himself open to the reproach that he has made things too easy for himself. He has not achieved the essence of morality, renunciation, for the moral conduct of life is a practical human interest. He reminds one of the barbarians of the great migrations, who murdered and did penance for it, till penance became an actual technique for enabling murder to be done. Ivan the Terrible behaved in exactly this way; indeed this compromise with morality is a characteristic Russian trait. Nor was the final outcome of Dostoevsky's moral strivings anything very glorious. After the most violent struggles to reconcile the instinctual demands of the individual with the claims of the community, he landed in the retrograde position of submission both to temporal and spiritual authority, of veneration both for the Tsar and for the God of the Christians, and of a narrow Russian nationalism—a position which lesser minds have reached with smaller effort. This is the weak point in that great personality. Dostoevsky threw away the chance of becoming a teacher and liberator of humanity and made himself one with their gaolers. The future of human civilization will have little to thank him for. It seems probable that he was condemned to this

failure by his neurosis. The greatness of his intelligence and the strength of his love for humanity might have opened to him another, an apostolic, way of life.

To consider Dostoevsky as a sinner or a criminal rouses violent opposition, which need not be based upon a philistine assessment of criminals. The real motive for this opposition soon becomes apparent. Two traits are essential in a criminal: boundless egoism and a strong destructive urge. Common to both of these, and a necessary condition for their expression, is absence of love, lack of an emotional appreciation of (human) objects. One at once recalls the contrast to this presented by Dostoevsky—his great need of love and his enormous capacity for love, which is to be seen in manifestations of exaggerated kindness and caused him to love and to help where he had a right to hate and to be revengeful, as, for example, in his relations with his first wife and her lover. That being so, it must be asked why there is any temptation to reckon Dostoevsky among the criminals. The answer is that it comes from his choice of material, which singles out from all others violent, murderous and egoistic characters, thus pointing to the existence of similar tendencies within himself, and also from certain facts in his life, like his passion for gambling and his possible confession to a sexual assault upon a young girl.[1] The contradiction is resolved by the realization that Dostoevsky's very strong destructive instinct, which might easily have made him a criminal, was in his actual life directed mainly against his own person (inward instead of outward) and thus found expression as masochism and a sense of guilt. Nevertheless, his personality retained sadistic traits in plenty, which show themselves in his irritability, his love of tormenting and his intolerance even towards people he loved, and which appear also in the way in which, as

[1] See the discussion of this in Fülöp-Miller and Eckstein (1926). Stefan Zweig (1920) writes: 'He was not halted by the barriers of bourgeois morality; and no one can say exactly how far he transgressed the bounds of law in his own life or how much of the criminal instincts of his heroes was realized in himself.' For the intimate connection between Dostoevsky's characters and his own experiences, see René Fülöp-Miller's remarks in the introductory section of Fülöp-Miller and Eckstein (1925), which are based upon N. Strakhov [1921].—[The topic of a sexual assault on an immature girl appears several times in Dostoevsky's writings—especially in the posthumous *Stavrogin's Confession* and *The Life of a Great Sinner*.]

an author, he treats his readers. Thus in little things he was a sadist towards others, and in bigger things a sadist towards himself, in fact a masochist—that is to say the mildest, kindliest, most helpful person possible.

We have selected three factors from Dostoevsky's complex personality, one quantitative and two qualitative: the extraordinary intensity of his emotional life, his perverse innate instinctual disposition, which inevitably marked him out to be a sado-masochist or a criminal, and his unanalysable artistic gift. This combination might very well exist without neurosis; there are people who are complete masochists without being neurotic. Nevertheless, the balance of forces between his instinctual demands and the inhibitions opposing them (plus the available methods of sublimation) would even so make it necessary to classify Dostoevsky as what is known as an 'instinctual character'. But the position is obscured by the simultaneous presence of neurosis, which, as we have said, was not in the circumstances inevitable, but which comes into being the more readily, the richer the complication which has to be mastered by the ego. For neurosis is after all only a sign that the ego has not succeeded in making a synthesis, that in attempting to do so it has forfeited its unity.

How then, strictly speaking, does his neurosis show itself? Dostoevsky called himself an epileptic, and was regarded as such by other people, on account of his severe attacks, which were accompanied by loss of consciousness, muscular convulsions and subsequent depression. Now it is highly probable that this so-called epilepsy was only a symptom of his neurosis and must accordingly be classified as hystero-epilepsy—that is, as severe hysteria. We cannot be completely certain on this point for two reasons—firstly, because the anamnestic data on Dostoevsky's alleged epilepsy are defective and untrustworthy, and secondly, because our understanding of pathological states combined with epileptiform attacks is imperfect.

To take the second point first. It is unnecessary here to reproduce the whole pathology of epilepsy, for it would throw no decisive light on the problem. But this may be said. The old *morbus sacer* is still in evidence as an ostensible clinical entity, the uncanny disease with its incalculable, apparently unprovoked convulsive attacks, its changing of the character into irritability and aggressiveness, and its progressive lowering of all the

mental faculties. But the outlines of this picture are quite lacking in precision. The attacks, so savage in their onset, accompanied by biting of the tongue and incontinence of urine and working up to the dangerous *status epilepticus* with its risk of severe self-injuries, may, nevertheless, be reduced to brief periods of *absence*, or rapidly passing fits of vertigo or may be replaced by short spaces of time during which the patient does something out of character, as though he were under the control of his unconscious. These attacks, though as a rule determined, in a way we do not understand, by purely physical causes, may nevertheless owe their first appearance to some purely mental cause (a fright, for instance) or may react in other respects to mental excitations. However characteristic intellectual impairment may be in the overwhelming majority of cases, at least *one* case is known to us (that of Helmholtz) in which the affliction did not interfere with the highest intellectual achievement. (Other cases of which the same assertion has been made are either disputable or open to the same doubts as the case of Dostoevsky himself.) People who are victims of epilepsy may give an impression of dullness and arrested development just as the disease often accompanies the most palpable idiocy and the grossest cerebral defects, even though not as a necessary component of the clinical picture. But these attacks, with all their variations, also occur in other people who display complete mental development and, if anything, an excessive and as a rule insufficiently controlled emotional life. It is no wonder in these circumstances that it has been found impossible to maintain that 'epilepsy' is a single clinical entity. The similarity that we find in the manifest symptoms seems to call for a functional view of them. It is as though a mechanism for abnormal instinctual discharge had been laid down organically, which could be made use of in quite different circumstances—both in the case of disturbances of cerebral activity due to severe histolytic or toxic affections, and also in the case of inadequate control over the mental economy and at times when the activity of the energy operating in the mind reaches crisis-pitch. Behind this dichotomy we have a glimpse of the identity of the underlying mechanism of instinctual discharge. Nor can that mechanism stand remote from the sexual processes, which are fundamentally of toxic origin: the earliest physicians described coition as a minor epilepsy, and thus recognized in the sexual

act a mitigation and adaptation of the epileptic method of discharging stimuli.[1]

The 'epileptic reaction', as this common element may be called, is also undoubtedly at the disposal of the neurosis whose essence it is to get rid by somatic means of amounts of excitation which it cannot deal with psychically. Thus the epileptic attack becomes a symptom of hysteria and is adapted and modified by it just as it is by the normal sexual process of discharge. It is therefore quite right to distinguish between an organic and an 'affective' epilepsy. The practical significance of this is that a person who suffers from the first kind has a disease of the brain, while a person who suffers from the second kind is a neurotic. In the first case his mental life is subjected to an alien disturbance from without, in the second case the disturbance is an expression of his mental life itself.

It is extremely probable that Dostoevsky's epilepsy was of the second kind. This cannot, strictly speaking, be proved. To do so we should have to be in a position to insert the first appearance of the attacks and their subsequent fluctuations into the thread of his mental life; and for that we know too little. The descriptions of the attacks themselves teach us nothing and our information about the relations between them and Dostoevsky's experiences is defective and often contradictory. The most probable assumption is that the attacks went back far into his childhood, that their place was taken to begin with by milder symptoms and that they did not assume an epileptic form until after the shattering experience of his eighteenth year—the murder of his father.[2] It would be very much to the point if it

[1] [Cf. Freud's earlier paper on hysterical attacks (1909*a*), *Standard Ed.*, 9, 234.]

[2] See René Fülöp-Miller (1924). [Cf. also the account given by Aimée Dostoevsky (1921) in her life of her father.] Of especial interest is the information that in the novelist's childhood 'something terrible, unforgettable and agonizing' happened, to which the first signs of his illness were to be traced (from an article by Suvorin in the newspaper *Novoe Vremya*, 1881, quoted in the introduction to Fülöp-Miller and Eckstein, 1925, xlv). See also Orest Miller (1921, 140): 'There is, however, another special piece of evidence about Fyodor Mikhailovich's illness, which relates to his earliest youth and brings the illness into connection with a tragic event in the family life of his parents. But, although this piece of evidence was given to me orally by one who was a close friend of Fyodor Mikhailovich, I cannot bring myself to reproduce it fully and precisely since I have had no confirmation of this rumour from any other

could be established that they ceased completely during his exile in Siberia, but other accounts contradict this.[1]

The unmistakable connection between the murder of the father in *The Brothers Karamazov* and the fate of Dostoevsky's own father has struck more than one of his biographers, and has led them to refer to 'a certain modern school of psychology'. From the standpoint of psycho-analysis (for that is what is meant), we are tempted to see in that event the severest trauma and to regard Dostoevsky's reaction to it as the turning-point of his neurosis. But if I undertake to substantiate this view psycho-analytically, I shall have to risk the danger of being unintelligible to all those readers who are unfamiliar with the language and theories of psycho-analysis.

We have one certain starting-point. We know the meaning of the first attacks from which Dostoevsky suffered in his early years, long before the incidence of the 'epilepsy'. These attacks had the significance of death: they were heralded by a fear of death and consisted of lethargic, somnolent states. The illness first came over him while he was still a boy, in the form of a sudden, groundless melancholy, a feeling, as he later told his friend Soloviev, as though he were going to die on the spot. And there in fact followed a state exactly similar to real death. His brother Andrey tells us that even when he was quite young Fyodor used to leave little notes about before he went to sleep, saying that he was afraid he might fall into this death-like sleep during the night and therefore begged that his burial should be postponed for five days. (Fülöp-Miller and Eckstein, 1925, lx.)

We know the meaning and intention of such deathlike attacks.[2] They signify an identification with a dead person,

quarter.' Biographers and scientific research workers cannot feel grateful for this discretion.

[1] Most of the accounts, including Dostoevsky's own, assert on the contrary that the illness only assumed its final, epileptic character during the Siberian exile. Unfortunately there is reason to distrust the autobiographical statements of neurotics. Experience shows that their memories introduce falsifications which are designed to interrupt disagreeable causal connections. Nevertheless, it appears certain that Dostoevsky's detention in the Siberian prison markedly altered his pathological condition. Cf. Fülöp-Miller (1924, 1186).

[2] [The explanation was already given by Freud in a letter to Fliess of February 8, 1897 (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 58).]

either with someone who is really dead or with someone who is still alive and whom the subject wishes dead. The latter case is the more significant. The attack then has the value of a punishment. One has wished another person dead, and now one *is* this other person and is dead oneself. At this point psycho-analytical theory brings in the assertion that for a boy this other person is usually his father and that the attack (which is termed hysterical) is thus a self-punishment for a death-wish against a hated father.

Parricide, according to a well-known view, is the principal and primal crime of humanity as well as of the individual. (See my *Totem and Taboo*, 1912–13.) It is in any case the main source of the sense of guilt, though we do not know if it is the only one: researches have not yet been able to establish with certainty the mental origin of guilt and the need for expiation. But it is not necessary for it to be the only one. The psychological situation is complicated and requires elucidation. The relation of a boy to his father is, as we say, an 'ambivalent' one. In addition to the hate which seeks to get rid of the father as a rival, a measure of tenderness for him is also habitually present. The two attitudes of mind combine to produce identification with the father; the boy wants to be in his father's place because he admires him and wants to be like him, and also because he wants to put him out of the way. This whole development now comes up against a powerful obstacle. At a certain moment the child comes to understand that an attempt to remove his father as a rival would be punished by him with castration. So from fear of castration—that is, in the interests of preserving his masculinity—he gives up his wish to possess his mother and get rid of his father. In so far as this wish remains in the unconscious it forms the basis of the sense of guilt. We believe that what we have here been describing are normal processes, the normal fate of the so-called 'Oedipus complex'; nevertheless it requires an important amplification.

A further complication arises when the constitutional factor we call bisexuality is comparatively strongly developed in a child. For then, under the threat to the boy's masculinity by castration, his inclination becomes strengthened to diverge in the direction of femininity, to put himself instead in his mother's place and take over her role as object of his father's love. But the fear of castration makes *this* solution impossible as well.

The boy understands that he must also submit to castration if he wants to be loved by his father as a woman. Thus both impulses, hatred of the father and being in love with the father, undergo repression. There is a certain psychological distinction in the fact that the hatred of the father is given up on account of fear of an *external* danger (castration), while the being in love with the father is treated as an *internal* instinctual danger, though fundamentally it goes back to the same external danger.

What makes hatred of the father unacceptable is *fear* of the father; castration is terrible, whether as a punishment or as the price of love. Of the two factors which repress hatred of the father, the first, the direct fear of punishment and castration, may be called the normal one; its pathogenic intensification seems to come only with the addition of the second factor, the fear of the feminine attitude. Thus a strong innate bisexual disposition becomes one of the preconditions or reinforcements of neurosis. Such a disposition must certainly be assumed in Dostoevsky, and it shows itself in a viable form (as latent homosexuality) in the important part played by male friendships in his life, in his strangely tender attitude towards rivals in love and in his remarkable understanding of situations which are explicable only by repressed homosexuality, as many examples from his novels show.

I am sorry, though I cannot alter the facts, if this exposition of the attitudes of hatred and love towards the father and their transformations under the influence of the threat of castration seems to readers unfamiliar with psycho-analysis unsavoury and incredible. I should myself expect that it is precisely the castration complex that would be bound to arouse the most general repudiation. But I can only insist that psycho-analytic experience has put these matters in particular beyond the reach of doubt and has taught us to recognize in them the key to every neurosis. This key, then, we must apply to our author's so-called epilepsy. So alien to our consciousness are the things by which our unconscious mental life is governed!

But what has been said so far does not exhaust the consequences of the repression of the hatred of the father in the Oedipus complex. There is something fresh to be added: namely that in spite of everything the identification with the father finally makes a permanent place for itself in the ego. It is received into the ego, but establishes itself there as a separate

agency in contrast to the rest of the content of the ego. We then give it the name of super-ego and ascribe to it, the inheritor of the parental influence, the most important functions. If the father was hard, violent and cruel, the super-ego takes over those attributes from him and, in the relations between the ego and it, the passivity which was supposed to have been repressed is re-established. The super-ego has become sadistic, and the ego becomes masochistic—that is to say, at bottom passive in a feminine way. A great need for punishment develops in the ego, which in part offers itself as a victim to Fate, and in part finds satisfaction in ill-treatment by the super-ego (that is, in the sense of guilt). For every punishment is ultimately castration and, as such, a fulfilment of the old passive attitude towards the father. Even Fate is, in the last resort, only a later projection of the father.

The normal processes in the formation of conscience must be similar to the abnormal ones described here. We have not yet succeeded in fixing the boundary line between them. It will be observed that here the largest share in the outcome is ascribed to the passive component of repressed femininity. In addition, it must be of importance as an accidental factor whether the father, who is feared in any case, is also especially violent in reality. This was true in Dostoevsky's case, and we can trace back the fact of his extraordinary sense of guilt and of his masochistic conduct of life to a specially strong feminine component. Thus the formula for Dostoevsky is as follows: a person with a specially strong innate bisexual disposition, who can defend himself with special intensity against dependence on a specially severe father. This characteristic of bisexuality comes as an addition to the components of his nature that we have already recognized. His early symptoms of death-like attacks can thus be understood as a father-identification on the part of his ego, which is permitted by his super-ego as a punishment. 'You wanted to kill your father in order to be your father yourself. Now you *are* your father, but a dead father'—the regular mechanism of hysterical symptoms. And further: 'Now your father is killing *you*.' For the ego the death symptom is a satisfaction in phantasy of the masculine wish and at the same time a masochistic satisfaction; for the super-ego it is a punitive satisfaction—that is, a sadistic satisfaction. Both of them, the ego and the super-ego, carry on the role of father.

To sum up, the relation between the subject and his father-object, while retaining its content, has been transformed into a relation between the ego and the super-ego—a new setting on a fresh stage. Infantile reactions from the Oedipus complex such as these may disappear if reality gives them no further nourishment. But the father's character remained the same, or rather, it deteriorated with the years, and thus Dostoevsky's hatred for his father and his death-wish against that wicked father were maintained. Now it is a dangerous thing if reality fulfils such repressed wishes. The phantasy has become reality and all defensive measures are thereupon reinforced. Dostoevsky's attacks now assumed an epileptic character; they still undoubtedly signified an identification with his father as a punishment, but they had become terrible, like his father's frightful death itself. What further content they had absorbed, particularly what sexual content, escapes conjecture.

One thing is remarkable: in the aura of the epileptic attack, one moment of supreme bliss is experienced. This may very well be a record of the triumph and sense of liberation felt on hearing the news of the death, to be followed immediately by an all the more cruel punishment. We have divined just such a sequence of triumph and mourning, of festive joy and mourning, in the brothers of the primal horde who murdered their father, and we find it repeated in the ceremony of the totem meal.[1] If it proved to be the case that Dostoevsky was free from his attacks in Siberia, that would merely substantiate the view that they were his punishment. He did not need them any longer when he was being punished in another way. But that cannot be proved. Rather does this necessity for punishment on the part of Dostoevsky's mental economy explain the fact that he passed unbroken through these years of misery and humiliation. Dostoevsky's condemnation as a political prisoner was unjust and he must have known it, but he accepted the undeserved punishment at the hands of the Little Father, the Tsar, as a substitute for the punishment he deserved for his sin against his real father. Instead of punishing himself, he got himself punished by his father's deputy. Here we have a glimpse of the psychological justification of the punishments inflicted by society. It is a fact that large groups of criminals want to be punished. Their

[1] See *Totem and Taboo* [(1912–13), Section 5 of Essay IV, *Standard Ed.* **13**, 140].

super-ego demands it and so saves itself the necessity for inflicting the punishment itself.[1]

Everyone who is familiar with the complicated transformation of meaning undergone by hysterical symptoms will understand that no attempt can be made here to follow out the meaning of Dostoevsky's attacks beyond this beginning.[2] It is enough that we may assume that their original meaning remained unchanged behind all later accretions. We can safely say that Dostoevsky never got free from the feelings of guilt arising from his intention of murdering his father. They also determined his attitude in the two other spheres in which the father-relation is the decisive factor, his attitude towards the authority of the State and towards belief in God. In the first of these he ended up with complete submission to his Little Father, the Tsar, who had once performed with him in *reality* the comedy of killing which his attacks had so often represented in *play*. Here penitence gained the upper hand. In the religious sphere he retained more freedom: according to apparently trustworthy reports he wavered, up to the last moment of his life, between faith and atheism. His great intellect made it impossible for him to overlook any of the intellectual difficulties to which faith leads. By an individual recapitulation of a development in world-history he hoped to find a way out and a liberation from guilt in the Christ ideal, and even to make use of his sufferings as a claim to be playing a Christ-like role. If on the whole he did not achieve freedom and became a reactionary, that was because the filial guilt, which is present in human beings generally and on which religious feeling is built, had in him attained a super-individual intensity and remained insurmountable even to his great intelligence. In writing this we

[1] [Cf. 'Criminals from a Sense of Guilt', the third essay in Freud's 'Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work' (1916*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 332.]

[2] The best account of the meaning and content of his attacks was given by Dostoevsky himself, when he told his friend Strakhov that his irritability and depression after an epileptic attack were due to the fact that he seemed to himself a criminal and could not get rid of the feeling that he had a burden of unknown guilt upon him, that he had committed some great misdeed, which oppressed him. (Fülöp-Miller, 1924, 1188.) on self-accusations like these psycho-analysis sees signs of a recognition If 'psychical reality', and it endeavours to make the unknown guilt known to consciousness.

are laying ourselves open to the charge of having abandoned the impartiality of analysis and of subjecting Dostoevsky to judgements that can only be justified from the partisan standpoint of a particular *Weltanschauung*. A conservative would take the side of the Grand Inquisitor and would judge Dostoevsky differently. The objection is just; and one can only say in extenuation that Dostoevsky's decision has every appearance of having been determined by an intellectual inhibition due to his neurosis.

It can scarcely be owing to chance that three of the masterpieces of the literature of all time—the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*—should all deal with the same subject, parricide. In all three, moreover, the motive for the deed, sexual rivalry for a woman, is laid bare.

The most straightforward is certainly the representation in the drama derived from the Greek legend. In this it is still the hero himself who commits the crime. But poetic treatment is impossible without softening and disguise. The naked admission of an intention to commit parricide, as we arrive at it in analysis, seems intolerable without analytic preparation. The Greek drama, while retaining the crime, introduces the indispensable toning-down in a masterly fashion by projecting the hero's unconscious motive into reality in the form of a compulsion by a destiny which is alien to him. The hero commits the deed unintentionally and apparently uninfluenced by the woman; this latter element is however taken into account in the circumstance that the hero can only obtain possession of the queen mother after he has repeated his deed upon the monster who symbolizes the father. After his guilt has been revealed and made conscious, the hero makes no attempt to exculpate himself by appealing to the artificial expedient of the compulsion of destiny. His crime is acknowledged and punished as though it were a full and conscious one—which is bound to appear unjust to our reason, but which psychologically is perfectly correct.

In the English play the presentation is more indirect; the hero does not commit the crime himself; it is carried out by someone else, for whom it is not parricide. The forbidden motive of sexual rivalry for the woman does not need, therefore, to be disguised. Moreover, we see the hero's Oedipus complex,

as it were, in a reflected light, by learning the effect upon him of the other's crime. He ought to avenge the crime, but finds himself, strangely enough, incapable of doing so. We know that it is his sense of guilt that is paralysing him; but, in a manner entirely in keeping with neurotic processes, the sense of guilt is displaced on to the perception of his inadequacy for fulfilling his task. There are signs that the hero feels this guilt as a super-individual one. He despises others no less than himself: 'Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?'

The Russian novel goes a step further in the same direction. There also the murder is committed by someone else. This other person, however, stands to the murdered man in the same filial relation as the hero, Dmitri; in this other person's case the motive of sexual rivalry is openly admitted; he is a brother of the hero's, and it is a remarkable fact that Dostoevsky has attributed to him his own illness, the alleged epilepsy, as though he were seeking to confess that the epileptic, the neurotic, in himself was a parricide. Then, again, in the speech for the defence at the trial, there is the famous mockery of psychology—it is a 'knife that cuts both ways':[1] a splendid piece of disguise, for we have only to reverse it in order to discover the deepest meaning of Dostoevsky's view of things. It is not psychology that deserves the mockery, but the procedure of judicial enquiry. It is a matter of indifference who actually committed the crime; psychology is only concerned to know who desired it emotionally and who welcomed it when it was done.[2] And for that reason all of the brothers, except the contrasted figure of Alyosha, are equally guilty—the impulsive sensualist, the sceptical cynic and the epileptic criminal. In *The Brothers Karamazov* there is one particularly revealing scene. In the course of his talk with Dmitri, Father Zossima recognizes that Dmitri is prepared to commit parricide, and he bows down at his feet. It is impossible that this can be meant as an expression of admiration; it must mean that the holy man is rejecting the temptation to despise or detest the murderer and for that reason humbles

[1] [In the German (and in the original Russian) the simile is 'a stick with two ends'. The 'knife that cuts both ways' is derived from Constance Garnett's English translation. The phrase occurs in Book XII, Chapter X, of the novel.]

[2] [A practical application of this to an actual criminal case is to be found in Freud's comments on the Halsmann Case (1931*d*), p. 251 below, where *The Brothers Karamazov* is again discussed.]

himself before him. Dostoevsky's sympathy for the criminal is, in fact, boundless; it goes far beyond the pity which the unhappy wretch has a right to, and reminds us of the 'holy awe' with which epileptics and lunatics were regarded in the past. A criminal is to him almost a Redeemer, who has taken on himself the guilt which must else have been borne by others. There is no longer any need for one to murder, since *he* has already murdered; and one must be grateful to him, for, except for him, one would have been obliged oneself to murder. That is not kindly pity alone, it is identification on the basis of similar murderous impulses—in fact, a slightly displaced narcissism. (In saying this, we are not disputing the ethical value of this kindliness.) This may perhaps be quite generally the mechanism of kindly sympathy with other people, a mechanism which one can discern with especial ease in this extreme case of a guilt-ridden novelist. There is no doubt that this sympathy by identification was a decisive factor in determining Dostoevsky's choice of material. He dealt first with the common criminal (whose motives are egotistical) and the political and religious criminal; and not until the end of his life did he come back to the primal criminal, the parricide, and use him, in a work of art, for making his confession.

The publication of Dostoevsky's posthumous papers and of his wife's diaries has thrown a glaring light on one episode in his life, namely the period in Germany when he was obsessed with a mania for gambling (cf. Fülöp-Miller and Eckstein, 1925), which no one could regard as anything but an unmistakable fit of pathological passion. There was no lack of rationalizations for this remarkable and unworthy behaviour. As often happens with neurotics, Dostoevsky's sense of guilt had taken a tangible shape as a burden of debt, and he was able to take refuge behind the pretext that he was trying by his winnings at the tables to make it possible for him to return to Russia without being arrested by his creditors. But this was no more than a pretext and Dostoevsky was acute enough to recognize the fact and honest enough to admit it. He knew that the chief thing was gambling for its own sake—*le jeu pour le jeu*.[1] All the details of his

[1] 'The main thing is the play itself,' he writes in one of his letters. 'I swear that greed for money has nothing to do with it, although Heaven knows I am sorely in need of money.'

impulsively irrational conduct show this and something more besides. He never rested until he had lost everything. For him gambling was a method of self-punishment as well. Time after time he gave his young wife his promise or his word of honour not to play any more or not to play any more on that particular day; and, as she says, he almost always broke it. When his losses had reduced himself and her to the direst need, he derived a second pathological satisfaction from that. He could then scold and humiliate himself before her, invite her to despise him and to feel sorry that she had married such an old sinner; and when he had thus unburdened his conscience, the whole business would begin again next day. His young wife accustomed herself to this cycle, for she had noticed that the one thing which offered any real hope of salvation—his literary production—never went better than when they had lost everything and pawned their last possessions. Naturally she did not understand the connection. When his sense of guilt was satisfied by the punishments he had inflicted on himself, the inhibition upon his work became less severe and he allowed himself to take a few steps along the road to success.[1]

What part of a gambler's long-buried childhood is it that forces its way to repetition in his obsession for play? The answer may be divined without difficulty from a story by one of our younger writers. Stefan Zweig, who has incidentally devoted a study to Dostoevsky himself (1920), has included in his collection of three stories *Die Verwirrung der Gefühle* [*Confusion of Feelings*] (1927) one which he calls 'Vierundzwanzig Stunden aus dem Leben einer Frau' ['Four-and-Twenty Hours in a Woman's Life']. This little masterpiece ostensibly sets out only to show what an irresponsible creature woman is, and to what excesses, surprising even to herself, an unexpected experience may drive her. But the story tells far more than this. If it is subjected to an analytical interpretation, it will be found to represent (without any apologetic intent) something quite different, something universally human, or rather something masculine. And such an interpretation is so extremely obvious that

[1] 'He always remained at the gaming tables till he had lost everything and was totally ruined. It was only when the damage was quite complete that the demon at last retired from his soul and made way for the creative genius.' (Fülöp-Miller and Eckstein, 1925, lxxxvi.)

it cannot be resisted. It is characteristic of the nature of artistic creation that the author, who is a personal friend of mine, was able to assure me, when I asked him, that the interpretation which I put to him had been completely strange to his knowledge and intention, although some of the details woven into the narrative seemed expressly designed to give a clue to the hidden secret.

In this story, an elderly lady of distinction tells the author about an experience she has had more than twenty years earlier. She has been left a widow when still young and is the mother of two sons, who no longer need her. In her forty-second year, expecting nothing further of life, she happens, on one of her aimless journeyings, to visit the Rooms at Monte Carlo. There, among all the remarkable impressions which the place produces, she is soon fascinated by the sight of a pair of hands which seem to betray all the feelings of the unlucky gambler with terrifying sincerity and intensity. These hands belong to a handsome young man—the author, as though unintentionally, makes him of the same age as the narrator's elder son—who, after losing everything, leaves the Rooms in the depth of despair, with the evident intention of ending his hopeless life in the Casino gardens. An inexplicable feeling of sympathy compels her to follow him and make every effort to save him. He takes her for one of the importunate women so common there and tries to shake her off; but she stays with him and finds herself obliged, in the most natural way possible, to join him in his apartment at the hotel, and finally to share his bed. After this improvised night of love, she exacts a most solemn vow from the young man, who has now apparently calmed down, that he will never play again, provides him with money for his journey home and promises to meet him at the station before the departure of his train. Now, however, she begins to feel a great tenderness for him, is ready to sacrifice all she has in order to keep him and makes up her mind to go with him instead of saying goodbye. Various mischances delay her, so that she misses the train. In her longing for the lost one she returns once more to the Rooms and there, to her horror, sees once more the hands which had first excited her sympathy: the faithless youth had gone back to his play. She reminds him of his promise, but, obsessed by his passion, he calls her a spoil-sport, tells her to go, and flings back the money with which she has tried to rescue him. She hurries

away in deep mortification and learns later that she has not succeeded in saving him from suicide.

The brilliantly told, faultlessly motivated story is of course complete in itself and is certain to make a deep effect upon the reader. But analysis shows us that its invention is based fundamentally upon a wishful phantasy belonging to the period of puberty, which a number of people actually remember consciously. The phantasy embodies a boy's wish that his mother should herself initiate him into sexual life in order to save him from the dreaded injuries caused by masturbation. (The numerous creative works that deal with the theme of redemption have the same origin.) The 'vice' of masturbation is replaced by the addiction to gambling;[1] and the emphasis laid upon the passionate activity of the hands betrays this derivation. Indeed, the passion for play is an equivalent of the old compulsion to masturbate; 'playing' is the actual word used in the nursery to describe the activity of the hands upon the genitals. The irresistible nature of the temptation, the solemn resolutions, which are nevertheless invariably broken, never to do it again, the stupefying pleasure and the bad conscience which tells the subject that he is ruining himself (committing suicide)—all these elements remain unaltered in the process of substitution. It is true that Zweig's story is told by the mother, not by the son. It must flatter the son to think: 'if my mother only knew what dangers masturbation involves me in, she would certainly save me from them by allowing me to lavish all my tenderness on her own body'. The equation of the mother with a prostitute, which is made by the young man in the story, is linked up with the same phantasy. It brings the unattainable woman within easy reach. The bad conscience which accompanies the phantasy brings about the unhappy ending of the story. It is also interesting to notice how the *façade* given to the story by its author seeks to disguise its analytic meaning. For it is extremely questionable whether the erotic life of women is dominated by sudden and mysterious impulses. On the contrary, analysis reveals an adequate motivation for the surprising behaviour of this woman who had hitherto turned away from love. Faithful to the memory of her dead husband, she had armed herself

[1] [In a letter to Fliess of December 22, 1897, Freud suggested that masturbation is the 'primal addiction', for which all later addictions are substitutes (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 79).]

against all similar attractions; but—and here the son's phantasy is right—she did not, as a mother, escape her quite unconscious transference of love on to her son, and Fate was able to catch her at this undefended spot.

If the addiction to gambling, with the unsuccessful struggles to break the habit and the opportunities it affords for self-punishment, is a repetition of the compulsion to masturbate, we shall not be surprised to find that it occupied such a large space in Dostoevsky's life. After all, we find no cases of severe neurosis in which the auto-erotic satisfaction of early childhood and of puberty has not played a part; and the relation between efforts to suppress it and fear of the father are too well known to need more than a mention.[1]

[1] Most of the views which are here expressed are also contained in an excellent book by Jolan Neufeld (1923).

# APPENDIX

## A Letter from Freud to Theodor Reik

[A few months after the publication of Freud's essay on Dostoevsky, a discussion of it by Theodor Reik appeared in *Imago* (in the second issue for 1929, **15**, 232–42). Though Reik's comments were on the whole appreciative, he argued at considerable length that Freud's judgement on Dostoevsky's morals was unjustifiably severe and disagreed too with what Freud wrote about morality in the third paragraph of the essay. He also, incidentally, criticized the *form* of the essay, with its apparently disconnected tail-end. After reading these criticisms[1] Freud sent Reik a letter in reply; and when, not long afterwards, Reik reprinted his article in a book of collected papers (1930), Freud agreed that his letter should also be included. An English translation of the criticism and of the reply to it were published later in Reik's *From Thirty Years with Freud* (New York, 1940 and London, 1942). It is with Dr. Theodor Reik's kind permission that we publish Freud's letter to him in a revised translation.]

April 14, 1929

. . . I have read your critical review of my Dostoevsky study with great pleasure. All your objections deserve consideration and must be recognized as in a sense apt. I can bring forward a little in my defence. But of course it will not be a question of who is right or who is wrong.

I think you are applying too high a standard to this triviality. It was written as a favour to someone[2] and written reluctantly. I always write reluctantly nowadays. No doubt you noticed this about it. This is not meant, of course, to excuse hasty or false judgements, but merely the careless architecture of the essay as a whole. I cannot dispute the unharmonious effect produced by the addition of the Zweig analysis; but deeper examination will perhaps show some justification for it. If I had not been hampered by considerations of the place where my essay was to

[1] [See footnote 2 on p. 196 below.]

[2] [No doubt Eitingon, who had persistently pressed Freud to finish the essay (Jones, 1957, 152).]

appear, I should certainly have written: 'We may expect that in the history of a neurosis accompanied by such a severe sense of guilt a special part will be played by the struggle against masturbation. This expectation is completely fulfilled by Dostoevsky's pathological addiction to gambling. For, as we can see from a short story of Zweig's . . . etc.' That is to say, the amount of space given to the short story corresponds not to the relation: Zweig—Dostoevsky, but to the other one: masturbation—neurosis. All the same, the outcome was clumsy.

I hold firmly to a scientifically objective social assessment of ethics, and for that reason I should not wish to deny the excellent Philistine a certificate of good ethical conduct, even though it has cost him little self-discipline.[1] But alongside of this I grant the validity of the subjective psychological view of ethics which you support. Though I agree with your judgement of the world and mankind as they are to-day, I cannot, as you know, regard your pessimistic dismissal of a better future as justified.

As you suggest, I included Dostoevsky the psychologist under the creative artist. Another objection I might have raised against him was that his insight was so much restricted to abnormal mental life. Consider his astonishing helplessness in face of the phenomena of love. All he really knew were crude, instinctual desire, masochistic subjection and loving out of pity. You are right, too, in suspecting that, in spite of all my admiration for Dostoevsky's intensity and pre-eminence, I do not really like him. That is because my patience with pathological natures is exhausted in analysis. In art and life I am intolerant of them. Those are character traits personal to me and not binding on others.

Where are you going to publish your essay?[2] I rate it very highly. It is only scientific research that must be without presumptions. In every other kind of thinking the choice of a point of view cannot be avoided; and there are, of course, several of these . . .

[1] [Reik had written: 'Renunciation was once the criterion of morality; to-day it is only one of many. If it were the only one, then the excellent citizen and Philistine, who, with his dull sensibility, submits to the authorities and for whom renunciation is made much easier by his lack of imagination, would be far superior to Dostoevsky in morality.']

[2] [This seems to show that Reik had shown Freud his criticism before its publication in *Imago*, though it is possible that what Freud had in mind was the question of the reprint.]

# SOME DREAMS OF DESCARTES'

## A LETTER TO MAXIME LEROY

(1929)

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## BRIEF AN MAXIM [*sic*] LEROY: ÜBER EINEN TRAUM DES CARTESIUS

(*a*) FRENCH EDITIONS:

1929 In Leroy's *Descartes, le philosophe au masque*, **1**, 89–90, Paris: Editions Rieder. (In French.)

1934 *G.S.*, **12**, 403–5. (Reprint of Freud's letter and extracts from Leroy's book. In French.)

1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 558–60. (Reprint of above.)

The present translation, the first into English, is by Angela Richards.

No German original of this letter is extant. The French version was almost certainly made by Leroy, and it provides at best an unsatisfactory basis for the English translation.

While Maxime Leroy was preparing his book on Descartes (1929), he submitted a series of the philosopher's dreams[1] to Freud for his comments. We cannot tell exactly what account Leroy gave Freud of the dreams, for the German editions do not print the text of his actual letter but merely quote the description of the dreams from Leroy's published volume, in which he also printed his translation of Freud's reply to his enquiry.

Descartes' original account and interpretation of the dreams seem to have occupied the opening pages of a manuscript known as the 'Olympica', which was probably written during the winter of 1619–20 and which is now lost. It was, however, seen by the seventeenth-century abbé, Adrien Baillet, who published a paraphrased translation, containing some quotations from the original Latin, in his *Vie de Monsieur Des-Cartes* (Paris, 1691, **1**). The account of the dreams is on pp. 81–5. It is on this version that Leroy based his account, but it seems certain that Freud studied Baillet's full text, since, for example

[1] What was in question was a *set* of dreams dreamt on the same night and not a single one, as the German title implies. Freud himself refers to them in the plural (p. 203, below).

Freud speaks in his reply of 'the melon from a foreign land'—a phrase which appears in Baillet's transcription—whereas in his book Leroy simply mentions 'a melon'.

The manuscript of the 'Olympica' was also seen by Leibnitz, who made a copy of extracts from it. Unfortunately Leibnitz's notes contain only one brief reference to the dreams: '*Somnium 1619, nov. in quo carmen 7 cujus initium: Quod vitae sectabor iter? . . . Auson*'.[1] Since he makes no mention of having seen the 'explanation' of the dreams, Leroy was inclined to think that it was, to a great extent at least, a fabrication of the Abbé Baillet—a view which he expresses in his book, although no hint of it seems to have reached Freud.[2]

Leroy's published account of the dreams (1929, **1**, 84)—a paraphrase of Baillet's version—which appears (in French) as a footnote in the German editions of Freud, is as follows:

'Then, during the night, when all was fever, thunderstorms, panic, phantoms rose before the dreamer. He tried to get up in order to drive them away. But he fell back, ashamed of himself, feeling troubled by a great weakness in his right side. All at once, a window in the room opened. Terrified, he felt himself carried away by the gusts of a violent wind, which made him whirl round several times on his left foot.

'Dragging himself staggering along, he reached the buildings of the college in which he had been educated. He tried desperately to enter the chapel, to make his devotions. At that moment some people passed by. He wanted to stop in order to speak to them; he noticed that one of them was carrying a melon. But a violent wind drove him back towards the chapel.

'He then woke up, with twinges of sharp pain in his left side. He did not know whether he was dreaming or awake. Half-awake, he told himself that an evil genius was trying to seduce him, and he murmured a prayer to exorcise it.

'He went to sleep again. A clap of thunder woke him again and filled his room with flashes. Once more he asked himself whether he was asleep or awake, whether it was a dream or a day-dream, opening and shutting his eyes so as to reach a certainty. Then, reassured, he dozed off, swept away by exhaustion.

[1] 'A dream 1619, November, in which Ode VII, which begins: What path in life shall I follow? . . . Ausonius.' Cf. Descartes, 1859–60, **1**, 8.

[2] For a full discussion of this whole problem cf. Gouhier, 1958.

'With his brain on fire, excited by these rumours and vague sufferings, Descartes opened a dictionary and then a collection of poems. The intrepid traveller dreamt of this line: "*Quod vitae sectabor iter?*" Another journey in the land of dreams? Then suddenly there appeared a man he did not know, intending to make him read a passage from Ausonius beginning with the words "*Est et non*".[1] But the man disappeared and another took his place. The book vanished in its turn, then re-appeared decorated with portraits in copper-plate. Finally, the night grew quiet.'

The explanation of the dreams, which Leroy (ibid., 85) quotes from Baillet (also printed as a footnote in the German editions of Freud), is as follows:

'He [Descartes] considered that the "dictionary" merely meant all the Sciences combined; and that the "collection of poems", entitled *Corpus Poetarum*, indicated particularly and more distinctly Philosophy and Wisdom united . . . M. Descartes, continuing to interpret his dream while he was asleep, thought that the piece of verse on the uncertainty of the kind of life one should choose, and beginning "*Quod vitae sectabor iter?*" indicated good advice from a wise person, or even Moral Theology . . .

'By the poets brought together in the collection he understood Revelation and Enthusiasm, with which he did not despair of being favoured. By the piece of verse "*Est et non*" (which is the Yes and No of Pythagoras) he understood Truth and Falsehood in human knowledge and the profane sciences. Seeing that the application of all these things was so successfully to his liking, he was bold enough to persuade himself that it was the Spirit of Truth which had chosen to open all the treasures of science to him by this dream. And since nothing was left for him to explain but the little Portraits in copper-plate [*taille douce*] which he had found in the second book, he sought no longer for their explanation after an Italian painter had paid him a visit the very next day.

'This last dream, which contained nothing but what was very pleasant [*doux*] and very agreeable, indicated the future, he thought: and it was concerned only with what was to occur to him during the rest of his life. But he took the two earlier ones as

[1] 'It is and is not.' The odes quoted are Nos. 2 and 4 of Book VII.

threatening warnings in regard to his past life, which might not have been so innocent in God's eyes as in those of men. And he thought this was the reason for the terror and fright with which those two dreams were accompanied. The melon with which they tried to present him in the first dream meant, he said, the charms of solitude, but presented by purely human inducements. The wind which drove him towards the college Church, when he had a pain in his right side, was nothing other than the evil Genius trying to throw him by force into a place which it was his intention to enter voluntarily. That was why God did not allow him to advance further, or to let himself be carried even to a holy place by a Spirit which He had not sent—although he was very much convinced that it had been a Spirit of God who had led him to make his first approaches to this Church. The terror with which he was struck in the second dream indicated, in his view, his synderesis—that is to say, the remorse of his conscience regarding the sins he might have committed during the course of his life up till then. The thunder of which he heard the crash was the signal of the spirit of truth descending on him to take possession of him.'

# SOME DREAMS OF DESCARTES'

## A Letter to Maxime Leroy

On considering your letter asking me to examine some dreams of Descartes', my first feeling was an impression of dismay, since working on dreams without being able to obtain from the dreamer himself any indications on the relations which might link them to one another or attach them to the external world—and this is clearly the case when it is a question of the dreams of a historical figure—gives, as a general rule, only a meagre result. In the event my task turned out to be easier than I had anticipated; nevertheless, the fruit of my investigations will no doubt seem to you much less important than you had a right to expect.

Our philosopher's dreams are what are known as 'dreams from above' ('*Träume von oben*').[1] That is to say, they are formulations of ideas which could have been created just as well in a waking state as during the state of sleep, and which have derived their content only in certain parts from mental states at a comparatively deep level. That is why these dreams offer for the most part a content which has an abstract, poetic or symbolic form.

The analysis of dreams of this kind usually leads us to the following position: we cannot understand the dream, but the dreamer—or the patient—can translate it immediately and without difficulty, given that the content of the dream is very close to his conscious thoughts. There then remain certain parts of the dream about which the dreamer does not know what to say: and these are precisely the parts which belong to the unconscious and which are in many respects the most interesting.

In the most favourable cases we explain this unconscious [part] with the help of the ideas which the dreamer has added to it.

This way of judging 'dreams from above'—and this term must be understood in a psychological, not in a mystical, sense—is the one to be followed in the case of Descartes' dreams.

[1] [Cf. Section III of 'The Theory and Practice of Dream-Interpretation' (1923*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 111.]

The philosopher interprets them himself and, in accordance with all the rules for the interpretation of dreams, we must accept his explanation, but it should be added that we have no path open to us which will take us any further.

In confirmation of his explanation we can say that the hindrances which prevented him from moving freely are perfectly well known to us: they are a representation by the dream of an internal conflict. The left side represents evil and sin, and the wind the 'evil genius' (*animus*).

The different figures who appear in the dream cannot of course be identified by us, although Descartes, if he were questioned, would not have failed to identify them. The bizarre elements, of which, incidentally, there are few, and which are almost absurd—such as 'the melon from a foreign land', and the little portraits—remain unexplained.

As regards the melon, the dreamer has had the—original—idea of seeing in it 'the charms of solitude, but presented by purely human inducements'. This is certainly not correct, but it might provide an association of ideas which would lead to a correct explanation. If it is correlated with his state of sin, this association might stand for a sexual picture which occupied the lonely young man's imagination.

On the question of the portraits Descartes throws no light.

# THE GOETHE PRIZE
(1930)

## GOETHE-PREIS, 1930

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

Brief an Dr. Alfons Paquet

1930 *Psychoanal. Bewegung*, **2** (5) (Sept.–Oct.), 419.
1934 *G.S.*, **12**, 406–7.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 545–6.

Ansprache im Frankfurter Goethe-Haus

1930 *Psychoanal. Bewegung*, **2** (5) (Sept.–Oct.), 421–6.
1934 *G.S.*, **12**, 408–11.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 547–50.

The present translation, the first into English, is by Angela Richards.

In 1927 the City of Frankfurt founded the 'Goethe Prize', which was to be awarded annually to 'a personality of established achievement whose creative work is worthy of an honour dedicated to Goethe's memory'. The first three awards were made to Stefan George the poet, Albert Schweitzer the musician and medical missionary, and Leopold Ziegler the philosophical writer. The amount of the prize was 10,000 Reichsmark—worth at that time about £500 or $2500.

At the suggestion of Alfons Paquet, a well-known man of letters who was Secretary to the Trustees of the Fund, it was decided to award the 1930 prize to Freud. This was announced to Freud (who was on holiday at the time in the Salzkammergut) in a letter from Paquet dated July 26, 1930 (printed in the *Psychoanalytische Bewegung*, **2**, 417–18), to which Freud replied on August 3.[1] It was the practice, as Paquet explained in his letter, for the prize to be presented each year on August 28 at a ceremony in the house in Frankfurt where Goethe was born, and for the recipient to give an address there, illustrating his own inner relation to Goethe. Owing to his illness, Freud was unable to do this himself, but the address which he prepared was read by Anna Freud at the ceremony in the Goethe House on August 28.

[1] The date is given as August 5 in the two later German editions.

# LETTER TO DR. ALFONS PAQUET

Grundlsee, 3.8.1930

My dear Dr. Paquet,

I have not been spoilt by public marks of honour and I have so adapted myself to this state of things that I have been able to do without them. I should not like to deny, however, that the award of the Goethe Prize of the City of Frankfurt has given me great pleasure. There is something about it that especially fires the imagination and one of its stipulations dispels the feeling of humiliation which in other cases is a concomitant of such distinctions.

I must particularly thank you for your letter; it moved and astonished me. Apart from your sympathetic penetration into the nature of my work, I have never before found the secret, personal intentions behind it recognized with such clarity as by you, and I should very much like to ask you how you come by such knowledge.

I am sorry to learn from your letter to my daughter that I am not to see you in the near future, and postponement is always a chancy affair at my time of life. Of course I shall be most ready to receive the gentleman (Dr. Michel) whose visit you announce.

Unfortunately I shall not be able to attend the ceremony in Frankfurt; I am too frail for such an undertaking. The company there will lose nothing by that: my daughter Anna is certainly pleasanter to look at and to listen to than I am. We propose that she shall read out a few sentences of mine which deal with Goethe's connections with psycho-analysis and defend the analysts themselves against the reproach of having offended against the respect due to the great man by the analytic attempts they have made on him. I hope it will be acceptable if I thus adapt the theme that has been proposed to me—my 'inner relations as a man and a scientist to Goethe'—or else that you will be kind enough to let me know.

Yours very sincerely,

Freud

# ADDRESS DELIVERED IN THE GOETHE HOUSE AT FRANKFURT

My life's work has been directed to a single aim. I have observed the more subtle disturbances of mental function in healthy and sick people and have sought to infer—or, if you prefer it, to guess—from signs of this kind how the apparatus which serves these functions is constructed and what concurrent and mutually opposing forces are at work in it. What we—I, my friends and collaborators—have managed to learn in following this path has seemed to us of importance for the construction of a mental science which makes it possible to understand both normal and pathological processes as parts of the same natural course of events.

I was recalled from such narrow considerations by the astonishing honour which you do me. By evoking the figure of the great universal personality who was born in this house and who spent his childhood in these rooms, your distinction prompts one as it were to justify oneself before him and raises the question of how *he* would have reacted if his glance, attentive to every innovation in science, had fallen on psycho-analysis.

Goethe can be compared in versatility to Leonardo da Vinci, the Renaissance master, who like him was both artist and scientific investigator. But human images can never be repeated, and profound differences between the two great men are not lacking. In Leonardo's nature the scientist did not harmonize with the artist, he interfered with him and perhaps in the end stifled him. In Goethe's life both personalities found room side by side: at different times each allowed the other to predominate. In Leonardo it is plausible to associate his disturbance with that inhibition in his development which withdrew everything erotic, and hence psychology too, from his sphere of interest. In this respect Goethe's character was able to develop more freely.

I think that Goethe would not have rejected psycho-analysis in an unfriendly spirit, as so many of our contemporaries have done. He himself approached it at a number of points, recognized much through his own insight that we have since been able to confirm, and some views, which have brought criticism

and mockery down upon us, were expounded by him as self-evident. Thus he was familiar with the incomparable strength of the first affective ties of human creatures. He celebrated them in the Dedication to his *Faust* poem, in words which we could repeat for each of our analyses:

> Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten,
> Die früh sich einst dem trüben Blick gezeigt,
> Versuch' ich wohl, euch diesmal festzuhalten?
> . . . . . .
> Gleich einer alten, halbverklungenen Sage
> Kommt erste Lieb' und Freundschaft mit herauf.[1]

He explained to himself the strongest impulse of love that he experienced as a mature man by apostrophizing his beloved: 'Ach, du warst in abgelebten Zeiten meine Schwester oder meine Frau.' [2]

Thus he does not deny that these perennial first inclinations take figures from one's own family circle as their object.

Goethe paraphrases the content of dream-life in the evocative words:

> Was von Menschen nicht gewusst
> Oder nicht bedacht,
> Durch das Labyrinth der Brust
> Wandelt in der Nacht.[3]

Behind this magic we recognize the ancient, venerable and incontestably correct pronouncement of Aristotle—that dreaming is the continuation of our mental activity into the state of sleep—combined with the recognition of the unconscious which psycho-analysis first added to it. Only the riddle of dream-distortion finds no solution here.

[1] [Again ye come, ye hovering forms! I find ye,
As early to my clouded sight ye shone!
Shall I attempt, this once, to seize and bind ye?
. . . . . .
And, like an old and half-extinct tradition,
First love returns, with friendship in his train.
From the opening lines of the Dedication to *Faust*, in Bayard Taylor's translation.]

[2] ['Ah, you were, in a past life, my sister or my wife.' From a poem to Charlotte von Stein, 'Warum gabst du uns die tiefen Blicke'.]

[3] ['That which, not known or not heeded by men, wanders in the night through the labyrinth of the heart.' From the final version of the poem 'An den Mond', which begins: 'Füllest wieder Busch und Tal'.]

In what is perhaps his most sublime poetical creation, *Iphigenie*, Goethe shows us a striking instance of expiation, of the freeing of a suffering mind from the burden of guilt, and he makes this catharsis come about through a passionate outburst of feeling under the beneficent influence of loving sympathy. Indeed, he himself repeatedly made attempts at giving psychological help—as for example to the unfortunate man who is named as Kraft in the Letters, and to Professor Plessing, of whom he tells in the *Campagne in Frankreich* [*Campaign in France*]; and the procedure which he applied goes beyond the method of the Catholic Confessional and approximates in some remarkable details to the technique of our psycho-analysis. There is an example of psychotherapeutic influence which is described by Goethe as a jest, but which I should like to quote in full since it may not be well known and yet is very characteristic. It is from a letter to Frau von Stein (No. 1444, of September 5, 1785):

'Yesterday evening I performed a psychological feat. Frau Herder was still in a state of tension of the most hypochondriacal kind over all the unpleasant things that had happened to her at Carlsbad. Particularly through the woman who was her companion in the house. I made her tell and confess everything to me, other people's misdeeds and her own faults with their most minute circumstances and consequences, and at the end I absolved her and made it clear to her, jestingly, in this formula, that these things were now done with and cast into the depths of the sea. She herself made fun of it all and is really cured.'

Goethe always rated Eros high, never tried to belittle its power, followed its primitive and even wanton expressions with no less attentiveness than its highly sublimated ones and has, as it seems to me, expounded its essential unity throughout all its manifestations no less decisively than Plato did in the remote past. Indeed, it is perhaps more than a chance coincidence when in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* [*The Elective Affinities*] he applies to love an idea taken from the sphere of chemistry—a connection to which the name of psycho-analysis itself bears witness.

I am prepared for the reproach that we analysts have forfeited the right to place ourselves under the patronage of Goethe because we have offended against the respect due to

him by trying to apply analysis to him himself: we have degraded the great man to the position of an object of analytic investigation. But I would dispute at once that any degradation is intended or implied by this.

We all, who revere Goethe, put up, without too much protest, with the efforts of his biographers, who try to recreate his life from existing accounts and indications. But what can these biographies achieve for us? Even the best and fullest of them could not answer the two questions which alone seem worth knowing about. It would not throw any light on the riddle of the miraculous gift that makes an artist, and it could not help us to comprehend any better the value and the effect of his works. And yet there is no doubt that such a biography does satisfy a powerful need in us. We feel this very distinctly if the legacy of history unkindly refuses the satisfaction of this need—for example in the case of Shakespeare. It is undeniably painful to all of us that even now we do not know who was the author of the Comedies, Tragedies and Sonnets of Shakespeare; whether it was in fact the untutored son of the provincial citizen of Stratford, who attained a modest position as an actor in London, or whether it was, rather, the nobly-born and highly cultivated, passionately wayward, to some extent *déclassé* aristocrat, Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain of England.[1] But how can we justify a need of this kind to obtain knowledge of the circumstances of a man's life when his works have become so full of importance to us? People generally say that it is our desire to bring ourselves nearer to such a man in a human way as well. Let us grant this; it is, then, the need to acquire affective relations with such men, to add them to the fathers, teachers, exemplars whom we have known or whose influence we have already experienced, in the expectation that their personalities will be just as fine and admirable as those works of art of theirs which we possess.

All the same, we may admit that there is still another motive-force at work. The biographer's justification also contains a confession. It is true that the biographer does not want to depose

[1] [This was Freud's first published expression of his views on the authorship of Shakespeare's works. He returned to the question in a footnote added in 1935 to Chapter VI of his *Autobiographical Study* (1925*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 63–4, and again at the end of Part II of his posthumous *Outline* (1940*a* [1938]).]

his hero, but he does want to bring him nearer to us. That means, however, reducing the distance that separates him from us: it still tends in effect towards degradation. And it is unavoidable that if we learn more about a great man's life we shall also hear of occasions on which he has in fact done no better than we, has in fact come near to us as a human being. Nevertheless, I think we may declare the efforts of biography to be legitimate. Our attitude to fathers and teachers is, after all, an ambivalent one since our reverence for them regularly conceals a component of hostile rebellion. That is a psychological fatality; it cannot be altered without forcible suppression of the truth and is bound to extend to our relations with the great men whose life histories we wish to investigate.[1]

When psycho-analysis puts itself at the service of biography, it naturally has the right to be treated no more harshly than the latter itself. Psycho-analysis can supply some information which cannot be arrived at by other means, and can thus demonstrate new connecting threads in the 'weaver's masterpiece'[2] spread between the instinctual endowments, the experiences and the works of an artist. Since it is one of the principal functions of our thinking to master the material of the external world psychically, it seems to me that thanks are due to psycho-analysis if, when it is applied to a great man, it contributes to the understanding of his great achievement. But, I admit, in the case of Goethe we have not yet succeeded very far. This is because Goethe was not only, as a poet, a great self-revealer, but also, in spite of the abundance of autobiographical records, a careful concealer. We cannot help thinking here of the words of Mephistopheles:

> Das Beste, was du wissen kannst,
> Darfst du den Buben doch nicht sagen.[3]

[1] [Freud had made some remarks on the relation of psycho-analysis to biography in his essay on Leonardo (1910*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **11**, 134–5. He had also discussed the question at a meeting of the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society on December 11, 1907. (Cf. Jones, 1955, 383.)]

[2] [A quotation from Mephistopheles's description of the fabric of thought, in *Faust*, Part I, Scene 4. Freud had quoted the whole passage, in connection with the complexity of dream-associations, in Chapter VI (A) of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **4**, 283.]

[3] [The best of what you know may not, after all, be told to boys. (*Faust*, Part I, Scene 4.)

Freud had often quoted these lines. For other instances see *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **4**, 142 *n.* 1.]

# APPENDIX

## LIST OF WRITINGS BY FREUD DEALING MAINLY OR LARGELY WITH ART, LITERATURE OR THE THEORY OF AESTHETICS

[*The date at the beginning of each entry is that of the year during which the work in question was probably written. The date at the end is that of publication, and under that date fuller particulars of the work will be found in the* Bibliography and Author Index. *The items in square brackets were published posthumously.*]

[1897 On *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet* in Letter 71 to Fliess of October 15, 1897. (1950*a*)]

[1898 'Die Richterin' ('The Woman Judge'), in Letter 91 to Fliess of June 20, 1898. (1950*a*)]

1899 *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Chapter V, Section D (*β*), on *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*. (1900*a*)

1905 *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. (1905*c*)

[1905–6 'Psychopathic Characters on the Stage.' (1942*a*)]

1906 *Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's 'Gradiva'*. (1907*a*)

1907 'Contribution to a Questionnaire on Reading.' (1907*d*)

1907 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming.' (1908*e*)

1910 *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood*. (1910*c*)

1913 'The Theme of the Three Caskets.' (1913*f*)

1913 'The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest', Part II, Section F. (1913*j*)

1914 'The Moses of Michelangelo.' (1914*b*)

1915 'On Transience.' (1916*a*)

1916 'Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work.' (1916*d*)

1917 'A Childhood Recollection from *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.' (1917*b*)

1919 'The "Uncanny".' (1919*h*)

1927 Postscript to 'The Moses of Michelangelo'. (1927*b*)

1927 'Humour.' (1927*d*)

1927 'Dostoevsky and Parricide.' (1928*b*)

1929 Letter to Reik on Dostoevsky. (1930*f*)
1930 'The Goethe Prize.' (1930*d* and *e*)
1933 Preface to Marie Bonaparte's *Edgar Allan Poe.* (1933*d*)

# LIBIDINAL TYPES
(1931)

## ÜBER LIBIDINÖSE TYPEN

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1931 *Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, **17** (3), 313–16.
1934 *G.S.*, **12**, 115–19.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 509–13.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:

'Libidinal Types'

1932 *Psychoan. Quart.*, **1** (1), 3–6. (Tr. E. B. Jackson.)
1932 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **13** (3), 277–80. (Tr. Joan Riviere.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 247–51. (Revised reprint of above.)

The present translation is a corrected version of that published in 1950.

Like the next paper ('Female Sexuality'), this was begun early in 1931 and finished during the summer. It is a late addition to the very small number of Freud's papers dealing with characterology. Though the topic crops up in a number of his writings (for instance, in the first half of Chapter III of *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 28 ff.), only two of his previous works had been explicitly concerned with it: 'Character and Anal Erotism' (1908*b*) and 'Some Character Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work' (1916*d*). In the present work the subject is considered in the light of Freud's later, structural, view of the mind.

# LIBIDINAL TYPES

OBSERVATION teaches us that individual human beings realize the general picture of humanity in an almost infinite variety of ways. If we yield to the legitimate need to distinguish particular types in this multiplicity, we shall at the start have the choice as to what characteristics and what points of view we shall take as the basis of our differentiation. For that purpose physical qualities will doubtless serve no less well than mental ones; the most valuable distinctions will be those which promise to present a regular combination of physical and mental characteristics.

It is doubtful whether we are as yet in a position to discover types to fulfil this requirement—as we shall no doubt be able to do later, on some basis of which we are still ignorant. If we confine our effort to setting up purely psychological types, the libidinal situation will have a first claim to serve as a basis for our classification. It may fairly be demanded that this classification should not merely be deduced from our knowledge or our hypotheses about the libido, but that it should be easily confirmed in actual experience and that it should contribute to the clarification of the mass of our observations and help us to grasp them. It may at once be admitted that these libidinal types need not be the only possible ones even in the psychical field, and that, if we proceeded from other qualities, we might perhaps establish a whole set of other psychological types. But it must be required of all such types that they shall not coincide with clinical pictures. On the contrary, they must comprehend all the variations which according to our practical judgement fall within the limits of the normal. In their extreme developments, however, they may well approximate to clinical pictures and in that way help to bridge the gulf that is supposed to lie between the normal and the pathological.

According, then, as the libido is predominantly allocated to the provinces of the mental apparatus, we can distinguish three main libidinal types. To give names to these types is not particularly easy; following the lines of our depth-psychology, I should like to call them the *erotic*, the *narcissistic* and the *obsessional* types.[1]

[1] [Freud had approached this classification of types in Chapter II of *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), p. 83 f. above.]

The *erotic* type is easily characterized. Erotics are those whose main interest—the relatively largest part of whose libido—is turned towards love. Loving, but above all being loved, is the most important thing for them. They are dominated by the fear of loss of love and are therefore especially dependent on others who may withhold their love from them. Even in its pure form this type is a very common one. Variants of it occur according as it is blended with another type and in proportion to the amount of aggressiveness present in it. From the social and cultural standpoint this type represents the elementary instinctual demands of the id, to which the other psychical agencies have become compliant.

The second type is what I have termed the *obsessional* type—a name which may at first seem strange. It is distinguished by the predominance of the super-ego, which is separated from the ego under great tension. People of this type are dominated by fear of their conscience instead of fear of losing love. They exhibit, as it were, an internal instead of an external dependence. They develop a high degree of self-reliance; and, from the social standpoint, they are the true, pre-eminently conservative vehicles of civilization.[1]

The third type, justly called the *narcissistic* type, is mainly to be described in negative terms. There is no tension between ego and super-ego (indeed, on the strength of this type one would scarcely have arrived at the hypothesis of a super-ego), and there is no preponderance of erotic needs. The subject's main interest is directed to self-preservation; he is independent and not open to intimidation. His ego has a large amount of aggressiveness at its disposal, which also manifests itself in readiness for activity. In his erotic life loving is preferred above being loved. People belonging to this type impress others as being 'personalities'; they are especially suited to act as a support for others, to take on the role of leaders and to give a fresh stimulus to cultural development or to damage the established state of affairs.

These pure types will hardly escape the suspicion of having been deduced from the theory of the libido. But we feel ourselves on the firm ground of experience when we turn to the mixed types, which are to be observed so much more frequently than the unmixed ones. These new types—the *erotic-obsessional*,

[1] [Cf. Chapter II of *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*), p. 11 above.]

the *erotic-narcissistic* and the *narcissistic-obsessional*—seem in fact to afford a good classification of the individual psychical structures which we have come to know through analysis. If we study these mixed types we find in them pictures of characters with which we have long been familiar. In the *erotic-obsessional* type it appears that the preponderance of instinctual life is restricted by the influence of the super-ego. In this type, dependence at once on contemporary human objects and on the residues of parents, educators and exemplars, is carried to its highest pitch. The *erotic-narcissistic* type is perhaps the one we must regard as the commonest of all. It unites opposites, which are able to moderate one another in it. One may learn from this type, as compared with the two other erotic ones, that aggressiveness and activity go along with a predominance of narcissism. Finally, the *narcissistic-obsessional* type produces the variation which is most valuable from a cultural standpoint; for it adds to independence of the external world and a regard for the demands of conscience a capacity for vigorous action, and it strengthens the ego against the super-ego.

One might think one was making a jest if one asked why no mention has been made here of another mixed type which is theoretically possible—namely, the *erotic-obsessional-narcissistic* type. But the answer to this jest is serious. Such a type would no longer be a type at all: it would be the absolute norm, the ideal harmony. We thus realize that the phenomenon of types arises precisely from the fact that, of the three main ways of employing the libido in the economy of the mind, one or two have been favoured at the expense of the others.

The question may also be raised of what the relation is of these libidinal types to pathology—whether some of them have a special disposition to pass over into neurosis, and if so, which types lead to which forms of neurosis. The answer is that the setting-up of these libidinal types throws no new light on the genesis of the neuroses. Experience shows that all these types can exist without any neurosis. The pure types, marked by the undisputed preponderance of a single mental agency, seem to have a better chance of manifesting themselves as pure characterological pictures, while we might expect that mixed types would provide a more favourable soil for conditions leading to a neurosis. But I think we should not make up our minds on

these matters till they have been a submitted to careful and specially directed examination.

It seems easy to infer that when people of the erotic type fall ill they will develop hysteria, just as those of the obsessional type will develop obsessional neurosis; but these inferences, too, share the uncertainty which I have just stressed. People of the narcissistic type who are exposed to a frustration from the external world, though otherwise independent, are peculiarly disposed to psychosis; and they also present essential preconditions for criminality.

It is a familiar fact that the aetiological preconditions of neurosis are not yet known with certainty. The precipitating causes of it are frustrations and internal conflicts: conflicts between the three major psychical agencies, conflicts arising within the libidinal economy in consequence of our bisexual disposition and conflicts between the erotic and the aggressive instinctual components. It is the endeavour of the psychology of the neuroses to discover what makes these processes, which belong to the normal course of mental life, become pathogenic.

# FEMALE SEXUALITY
(1931)

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## ÜBER DIE WEIBLICHE SEXUALITÄT

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1931 *Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, **17** (3), 317–22.
1934 *G.S.*, **12**, 120–40.
1948 *G.W.*, **14**, 517–37.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:

'Female Sexuality'

1932 *Psychoan. Quart.*, **1** (1), 191–209. (Tr. E. B. Jackson.)
1932 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **13** (3), 281–97. (Tr. Joan Riviere.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 252–72. (Revised reprint of above.)

The present translation is a modified version of the one published in 1950.

The first draft of this paper seems to have been written by the end of February, 1931, but it was only completed in the summer of that year (Jones, 1957, 176).

The present study is in essence a restatement of the findings first announced by Freud six years earlier in his paper on 'Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1925*j*), some discussion of which will be found in an Editor's Note to that work, *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 243. The publication of this earlier work provoked considerable repercussions among psycho-analysts, especially, perhaps, in England, and these may have stimulated Freud to return to the subject. The last section of the present paper contains—and this was a very unusual thing in Freud's writings—some criticisms of a number of other papers. And it is a curious thing that he seems to treat them as though these papers had arisen spontaneously and not, as was clearly the case, as a reaction to his own somewhat revolutionary paper of 1925—to which, indeed, he here makes no reference whatever.

There are, however, one or two respects in which this work enlarges upon its predecessor. It lays further emphasis (evidently

on the basis of fresh clinical material) on the intensity and long duration of the little girl's pre-Oedipus attachment to her mother. But of most interest, perhaps, is the long discussion of the *active* element in the little girl's attitude towards her mother and in femininity in general.

A year or so after the appearance of this paper Freud returned to the question of female sexuality in Lecture XXXIII of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*). This deals with the subject on very similar lines to the present ones, though in a rather less technical manner; it ends, moreover, with some discussion of the characteristics of women in adult life.

# FEMALE SEXUALITY

## I

DURING the phase of the normal Oedipus complex we find the child tenderly attached to the parent of the opposite sex, while its relation to the parent of its own sex is predominantly hostile. In the case of a boy there is no difficulty in explaining this. His first love-object was his mother. She remains so; and, with the strengthening of his erotic desires and his deeper insight into the relations between his father and mother, the former is bound to become his rival. With the small girl it is different. Her first object, too, was her mother. How does she find her way to her father? How, when and why does she detach herself from her mother? We have long understood that the development of female sexuality is complicated by the fact that the girl has the task of giving up what was originally her leading genital zone—the clitoris—in favour of a new zone—the vagina.[1] But it now seems to us that there is a second change of the same sort which is no less characteristic and important for the development of the female: the exchange of her original object—her mother—for her father. The way in which the two tasks are connected with each other is not yet clear to us.

It is well known that there are many women who have a strong attachment to their father; nor need they be in any way neurotic. It is upon such women that I have made the observations which I propose to report here and which have led me to adopt a particular view of female sexuality. I was struck, above all, by two facts. The first was that where the woman's attachment to her father was particularly intense, analysis showed that it had been preceded by a phase of exclusive attachment to her mother which had been equally intense and passionate. Except for the change of her love-object, the second phase had scarcely added any new feature to her erotic life. Her primary relation to her mother had been built up in a very rich and many-sided manner. The second fact taught me that the

[1] [*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 220–1. But the point had already been made in a letter to Fliess of November 14, 1897 (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 75).]

*duration* of this attachment had also been greatly underestimated. In several cases it lasted until well into the fourth year—in one case into the fifth year—so that it covered by far the longer part of the period of early sexual efflorescence. Indeed, we had to reckon with the possibility that a number of women remain arrested in their original attachment to their mother and never achieve a true change-over towards men. This being so, the pre-Oedipus phase in women gains an importance which we have not attributed to it hitherto.

Since this phase allows room for all the fixations and repressions from which we trace the origin of the neuroses, it would seem as though we must retract the universality of the thesis that the Oedipus complex is the nucleus of the neuroses. But if anyone feels reluctant about making this correction, there is no need for him to do so. On the one hand, we can extend the content of the Oedipus complex to include all the child's relations to both parents; or, on the other, we can take due account of our new findings by saying that the female only reaches the normal positive Oedipus situation after she has surmounted a period before it that is governed by the negative complex.[1] And indeed during that phase a little girl's father is not much else for her than a troublesome rival, although her hostility towards him never reaches the pitch which is characteristic of boys. We have, after all, long given up any expectation of a neat parallelism between male and female sexual development.

Our insight into this early, pre-Oedipus, phase in girls comes to us as a surprise, like the discovery, in another field, of the Minoan-Mycenean civilization behind the civilization of Greece.

Everything in the sphere of this first attachment to the mother seemed to me so difficult to grasp in analysis—so grey with age and shadowy and almost impossible to revivify—that it was as if it had succumbed to an especially inexorable repression. But perhaps I gained this impression because the women who were in analysis with me were able to cling to the very attachment to the father in which they had taken refuge from the early phase that was in question. It does indeed appear that women analysts—as, for instance, Jeanne Lampl - de Groot and Helene

[1] [The positive and negative Oedipus complexes were discussed by Freud in Chapter III of *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 33.)]

Deutsch—have been able to perceive these facts more easily and clearly because they were helped in dealing with those under their treatment by the transference to a suitable mother-substitute. Nor have I succeeded in seeing my way through any case completely, and I shall therefore confine myself to reporting the most general findings and shall give only a few examples of the new ideas which I have arrived at. Among these is a suspicion that this phase of attachment to the mother is especially intimately related to the aetiology of hysteria, which is not surprising when we reflect that both the phase and the neurosis are characteristically feminine, and further, that in this dependence on the mother we have the germ of later paranoia in women.[1] For this germ appears to be the surprising, yet regular, fear of being killed (? devoured) by the mother. It is plausible to assume that this fear corresponds to a hostility which develops in the child towards her mother in consequence of the manifold restrictions imposed by the latter in the course of training and bodily care and that the mechanism of projection is favoured by the early age of the child's psychical organization.[2]

## II

I began by stating the two facts which have struck me as new: that a woman's strong dependence on her father merely takes over the heritage of an equally strong attachment to her mother, and that this earlier phase has lasted for an unexpectedly long period of time. I shall now go back a little in order to insert these new findings into the picture of female sexual development with which we are familiar. In doing this, a certain amount of repetition will be inevitable. It will help our exposition if, as we go along, we compare the state of things in women with that in men.

First of all, there can be no doubt that the bisexuality, which is present, as we believe, in the innate disposition of human

[1] In the well-known case of delusional jealousy reported by Ruth Mack Brunswick (1928), the direct source of the disorder was the patient's pre-Oedipus fixation (to her sister). [Cf. also Freud's own 'Case of Paranoia Running Contrary to the Psycho-Analytic Theory of the Disease' (1915*f*).]

[2] [The girl's fear of being killed by her mother is discussed further below on p. 237.]

beings, comes to the fore much more clearly in women than in men. A man, after all, has only one leading sexual zone, one sexual organ, whereas a woman has two: the vagina—the female organ proper—and the clitoris, which is analogous to the male organ. We believe we are justified in assuming that for many years the vagina is virtually non-existent and possibly does not produce sensations until puberty. It is true that recently an increasing number of observers report that vaginal impulses are present even in these early years. In women, therefore, the main genital occurrences of childhood must take place in relation to the clitoris. Their sexual life is regularly divided into two phases, of which the first has a masculine character, while only the second is specifically feminine. Thus in female development there is a process of transition from the one phase to the other, to which there is nothing analogous in the male. A further complication arises from the fact that the clitoris, with its virile character, continues to function in later female sexual life in a manner which is very variable and which is certainly not yet satisfactorily understood. We do not, of course, know the biological basis of these peculiarities in women; and still less are we able to assign them any teleological purpose.

Parallel with this first great difference there is the other, concerned with the finding of the object. In the case of a male, his mother becomes his first love-object as a result of her feeding him and looking after him, and she remains so until she is replaced by someone who resembles her or is derived from her. A female's first object, too, must be her mother: the primary conditions for a choice of object are, of course, the same for all children. But at the end of her development, her father—a man—should have become her new love-object. In other words, to the change in her own sex there must correspond a change in the sex of her object. The new problems that now require investigating are in what way this change takes place, how radically or how incompletely it is carried out, and what the different possibilities are which present themselves in the course of this development.

We have already learned, too, that there is yet another difference between the sexes, which relates to the Oedipus complex. We have an impression here that what we have said about the Oedipus complex applies with complete strictness to

the male child only and that we are right in rejecting the term 'Electra complex'[1] which seeks to emphasize the analogy between the attitude of the two sexes. It is only in the male child that we find the fateful combination of love for the one parent and simultaneous hatred for the other as a rival. In his case it is the discovery of the possibility of castration, as proved by the sight of the female genitals, which forces on him the transformation of his Oedipus complex, and which leads to the creation of his super-ego and thus initiates all the processes that are designed to make the individual find a place in the cultural community. After the paternal agency has been internalized and become a super-ego, the next task is to detach the latter from the figures of whom it was originally the psychical representative. In this remarkable course of development it is precisely the boy's narcissistic interest in his genitals—his interest in preserving his penis—which is turned round into a curtailing of his infantile sexuality.[2]

One thing that is left over in men from the influence of the Oedipus complex is a certain amount of disparagement in their attitude towards women, whom they regard as being castrated. In extreme cases this gives rise to an inhibition in their choice of object, and, if it is supported by organic factors, to exclusive homosexuality.

Quite different are the effects of the castration complex in the female. She acknowledges the fact of her castration, and with it, too, the superiority of the male and her own inferiority; but she rebels against this unwelcome state of affairs. From this divided attitude three lines of development open up. The first leads to a general revulsion from sexuality. The little girl, frightened by the comparison with boys, grows dissatisfied with her clitoris, and gives up her phallic activity and with it her sexuality in general as well as a good part of her masculinity in other fields. The second line leads her to cling with defiant self-assertiveness to her threatened masculinity. To an incredibly late age she clings to the hope of getting a penis some

[1] [See 'The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman' (1920*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 155*n*. The term had been used by Jung in his 'Versuch einer Darstellung der psychoanalytischen Theorie' (1913, 370).]

[2] [For all of this see 'The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' (1924*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 173.]

time. That hope becomes her life's aim; and the phantasy of being a man in spite of everything often persists as a formative factor over long periods. This 'masculinity complex' in women can also result in a manifest homosexual choice of object. Only if her development follows the third, very circuitous, path does she reach the final normal female attitude, in which she takes her father as her object and so finds her way to the feminine form of the Oedipus complex. Thus in women the Oedipus complex is the end-result of a fairly lengthy development. It is not destroyed, but created, by the influence of castration; it escapes the strongly hostile influences which, in the male, have a destructive effect on it, and indeed it is all too often not surmounted by the female at all. For this reason, too, the cultural consequences of its break-up are smaller and of less importance in her. We should probably not be wrong in saying that it is this difference in the reciprocal relation between the Oedipus and the castration complex which gives its special stamp to the character of females as social beings.[1]

We see, then, that the phase of exclusive attachment to the mother, which may be called the *pre-Oedipus* phase, possesses a far greater importance in women than it can have in men. Many phenomena of female sexual life which were not properly understood before can be fully explained by reference to this phase. Long ago, for instance, we noticed that many women who have chosen their husband on the model of their father, or have put him in their father's place, nevertheless repeat towards him, in their married life, their bad relations with their

[1] It is to be anticipated that men analysts with feminist views, as well as our women analysts, will disagree with what I have said here. They will hardly fail to object that such notions spring from the 'masculinity complex' of the male and are designed to justify on theoretical grounds his innate inclination to disparage and suppress women. But this sort of psycho-analytic argumentation reminds us here, as it so often does, of Dostoevsky's famous 'knife that cuts both ways'. The opponents of those who argue in this way will on their side think it quite natural that the female sex should refuse to accept a view which appears to contradict their eagerly coveted equality with men. The use of analysis as a weapon of controversy can clearly lead to no decision.—[The Dostoevsky phrase (a simile applied to psychology) occurs in the speech for the defence in the account of Mitya's trial in Chapter X of Book XII of *The Brothers Karamazov*. Freud had quoted it already in his paper on 'Dostoevsky and Parricide' (1928*b*), p. 189 of this volume. The actual simile used by Freud and in the Russian original is 'a stick with two ends'.]

mother.[1] The husband of such a woman was meant to be the inheritor of her relation to her father, but in reality he became the inheritor of her relation to her mother. This is easily explained as an obvious case of regression. Her relation to her mother was the original one, and her attachment to her father was built up on it, and now, in marriage, the original relation emerges from repression. For the main content of her development to womanhood lay in the carrying over of her affective object attachments from her mother to her father.

With many women we have the impression that their years of maturity are occupied by a struggle with their husband, just as their youth was spent in a struggle with their mother. In the light of the previous discussions we shall conclude that their hostile attitude to their mother is not a consequence of the rivalry implicit in the Oedipus complex, but originates from the preceding phase and has merely been reinforced and exploited in the Oedipus situation. And actual analytic examination confirms this view. Our interest must be directed to the mechanisms that are at work in her turning away from the mother who was an object so intensely and exclusively loved. We are prepared to find, not a single factor, but a whole number of them operating together towards the same end.

Among these factors are some which are determined by the circumstances of infantile sexuality in general, and so hold good equally for the erotic life of boys. First and foremost we may mention jealousy of other people—of brothers and sisters, rivals, among whom the father too has a place. Childhood love is boundless; it demands exclusive possession, it is not content with less than all. But it has a second characteristic: it has, in point of fact, no aim and is incapable of obtaining complete satisfaction; and principally for that reason it is doomed to end in disappointment[2] and to give place to a hostile attitude. Later on in life the lack of an ultimate satisfaction may favour a different result. This very factor may ensure the uninterrupted continuance of the libidinal cathexis, as happens with love-relations that are inhibited in their aim. But in the stress of the processes of development it regularly happens that the libido abandons its unsatisfying position in order to find a new one.

Another, much more specific motive for turning away from

[1] [See 'The Taboo of Virginity' (1918*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **11**, 204 ff.]

[2] [Cf. ' "A Child is Being Beaten" ' (1919*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **17**, 188.]

the mother arises from the effect of the castration complex on the creature who is without a penis. At some time or other the little girl makes the discovery of her organic inferiority—earlier and more easily, of course, if there are brothers or other boys about. We have already taken note of the three paths which diverge from this point: (*a*) the one which leads to a cessation of her whole sexual life, (*b*) the one which leads to a defiant over-emphasis of her masculinity, and (*c*) the first steps towards definitive femininity. It is not easy to determine the exact timing here or the typical course of events. Even the point of time when the discovery of castration is made varies, and a number of other factors seem to be inconstant and to depend on chance. The state of the girl's own phallic activity plays a part; and so too does the question whether this activity was found out or not, and how much interference with it she experienced afterwards.

Little girls usually discover for themselves their characteristic phallic activity—masturbation of the clitoris;[1] and to begin with this is no doubt unaccompanied by phantasy. The part played in starting it by nursery hygiene is reflected in the very common phantasy which makes the mother or nurse into a seducer.[2] Whether little girls masturbate less frequently and from the first less energetically than little boys is not certain; quite possibly it is so. Actual seduction, too, is common enough; it is initiated either by other children or by someone in charge of the child who wants to soothe it, or send it to sleep or make it dependent on them. Where seduction intervenes it invariably disturbs the natural course of the developmental processes, and it often leaves behind extensive and lasting consequences.

A prohibition of masturbation, as we have seen, becomes an incentive for giving it up; but it also becomes a motive for rebelling against the person who prohibits it—that is to say, the mother, or the mother-substitute who later regularly merges with her. A defiant persistence in masturbation appears to open the way to masculinity. Even where the girl has not succeeded in suppressing her masturbation, the effect of the apparently vain prohibition is seen in her later efforts to free herself at all costs from a satisfaction which has been spoilt for her. When she reaches maturity her object-choice may still be influenced by

[1] [Cf. *Three Essays* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 220.]

[2] [Cf. a fuller discussion of this below, p. 238.]

this persisting purpose. Her resentment at being prevented from free sexual activity plays a big part in her detachment from her mother. The same motive comes into operation again after puberty, when her mother takes up her duty of guarding her daughter's chastity.[1] We shall, of course, not forget that the mother is similarly opposed to a boy's masturbating and thus provides him, too, with a strong motive for rebellion.

When the little girl discovers her own deficiency, from seeing a male genital, it is only with hesitation and reluctance that she accepts the unwelcome knowledge. As we have seen, she clings obstinately to the expectation of one day having a genital of the same kind too, and her wish for it survives long after her hope has expired. The child invariably regards castration in the first instance as a misfortune peculiar to herself; only later does she realize that it extends to certain other children and lastly to certain grown-ups.[2] When she comes to understand the general nature of this characteristic, it follows that femaleness—and with it, of course, her mother—suffers a great depreciation in her eyes.

This account of how girls respond to the impression of castration and the prohibition against masturbation will very probably strike the reader as confused and contradictory. This is not entirely the author's fault. In truth, it is hardly possible to give a description which has general validity. We find the most different reactions in different individuals, and in the same individual the contrary attitudes exist side by side. With the first intervention of the prohibition, the conflict is there, and from now on it will accompany the development of the sexual function. Insight into what takes place is made particularly difficult by the fact of its being so hard to distinguish the mental processes of this first phase from later ones by which they are overlaid and are distorted in memory. Thus, for instance, a girl may later construe the fact of castration as a punishment for her masturbatory activity, and she will attribute the carrying out of this punishment to her father, but neither of these ideas can have been a primary one. Similarly, boys regularly fear castration from their father, although in their case, too, the threat most usually comes from their mother.

[1] [Cf. 'A Case of Paranoia' (1915*f*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 267.]

[2] [Cf. an instance in a footnote to Chapter III of *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 31*n*.]

However this may be, at the end of this first phase of attachment to the mother, there emerges, as the girl's strongest motive for turning away from her, the reproach that her mother did not give her a proper penis—that is to say, brought her into the world as a female.[1] A second reproach, which does not reach quite so far back, is rather a surprising one. It is that her mother did not give her enough milk, did not suckle her long enough. Under the conditions of modern civilization this may be true often enough, but certainly not so often as is asserted in analyses. It would seem rather that this accusation gives expression to the general dissatisfaction of children, who, in our monogamous civilization, are weaned from the breast after six or nine months, whereas the primitive mother devotes herself exclusively to her child for two or three years. It is as though our children had remained for ever unsated, as though they had never sucked long enough at their mother's breast. But I am not sure whether, if one analysed children who had been suckled as long as the children of primitive peoples, one would not come upon the same complaint. Such is the greed of a child's libido!

When we survey the whole range of motives for turning away from the mother which analysis brings to light—that she failed to provide the little girl with the only proper genital, that she did not feed her sufficiently, that she compelled her to share her mother's love with others, that she never fulfilled all the girl's expectations of love, and, finally, that she first aroused her sexual activity and then forbade it—all these motives seem nevertheless insufficient to justify the girl's final hostility. Some of them follow inevitably from the nature of infantile sexuality; others appear like rationalizations devised later to account for the uncomprehended change in feeling. Perhaps the real fact is that the attachment to the mother is bound to perish, precisely because it was the first and was so intense; just as one can often see happen in the first marriages of young women which they have entered into when they were most passionately in love. In both situations the attitude of love probably comes to grief from the disappointments that are unavoidable and from the accumulation of occasions for aggression. As a rule, second marriages turn out much better.

[1] [Freud had pointed this out in the last paragraph of Section I of his paper on 'Some Character Types' (1916*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 315.]

We cannot go so far as to assert that the ambivalence of emotional cathexes is a universally valid law, and that it is absolutely impossible to feel great love for a person without its being accompanied by a hatred that is perhaps equally great, or vice versa. Normal adults do undoubtedly succeed in separating those two attitudes from each other, and do not find themselves obliged to hate their love-objects and to love their enemy as well as hate him. But this seems to be the result of later developments. In the first phases of erotic life, ambivalence is evidently the rule. Many people retain this archaic trait all through their lives. It is characteristic of obsessional neurotics that in their object-relationships love and hate counterbalance each other. In primitive races, too, we may say that ambivalence predominates.[1] We shall conclude, then, that the little girl's intense attachment to her mother is strongly ambivalent, and that it is in consequence precisely of this ambivalence that (with the assistance of the other factors we have adduced) her attachment is forced away from her mother—once again, that is to say, in consequence of a general characteristic of infantile sexuality.

The explanation I have attempted to give is at once met by a question: 'How is it, then, that boys are able to keep intact their attachment to their mother, which is certainly no less strong than that of girls?' The answer comes equally promptly: 'Because boys are able to deal with their ambivalent feelings towards their mother by directing all their hostility on to their father.' But, in the first place, we ought not to make this reply until we have made a close study of the pre-Oedipus phase in boys, and, in the second place, it is probably more prudent in general to admit that we have as yet no clear understanding of these processes, with which we have only just become acquainted.

## III

A further question arises: 'What does the little girl require of her mother? What is the nature of her sexual aims during the time of exclusive attachment to her mother?' The answer we obtain from the analytic material is just what we should expect.

[1] [See *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13) passim, and especially the second essay.]

The girl's sexual aims in regard to her mother are active as well as passive and are determined by the libidinal phases through which the child passes. Here the relation of activity to passivity is especially interesting. It can easily be observed that in every field of mental experience, not merely that of sexuality, when a child receives a passive impression it has a tendency to produce an active reaction. It tries to do itself what has just been done to it. This is part of the work imposed on it of mastering the external world and can even lead to its endeavouring to repeat an impression which it would have reason to avoid on account of its distressing content. Children's play, too, is made to serve this purpose of supplementing a passive experience with an active piece of behaviour and of thus, as it were, annulling it. When a doctor has opened a child's mouth, in spite of his resistance, to look down his throat, the same child, after the doctor has gone, will play at being the doctor himself, and will repeat the assault upon some small brother or sister who is as helpless in his hands as he was in the doctor's.[1] Here we have an unmistakable revolt against passivity and a preference for the active role. This swing-over from passivity to activity does not take place with the same regularity or vigour in all children; in some it may not occur at all. A child's behaviour in this respect may enable us to draw conclusions as to the relative strength of the masculinity and femininity that it will exhibit in its sexuality.

The first sexual and sexually coloured experiences which a child has in relation to its mother are naturally of a passive character. It is suckled, fed, cleaned, and dressed by her, and taught to perform all its functions. A part of its libido goes on clinging to those experiences and enjoys the satisfactions bound up with them; but another part strives to turn them into activity. In the first place, being suckled at the breast gives place to active sucking. As regards the other experiences the child contents itself either with becoming self-sufficient—that is, with itself successfully carrying out what had hitherto been done for it—or with repeating its passive experiences in an active form in play; or else it actually makes its mother into the object and behaves as the active subject towards her. For a long time I was unable to credit this last behaviour, which takes

[1] [Cf. the similar passage near the end of Chapter II of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 17.]

place in the field of real action, until my observations removed all doubts on the matter.

We seldom hear of a little girl's wanting to wash or dress her mother, or tell her to perform her excretory functions. Sometimes, it is true, she says: 'Now let's play that I'm the mother and you're the child'; but generally she fulfils these active wishes in an indirect way, in her play with her doll, in which she represents the mother and the doll the child. The fondness girls have for playing with dolls, in contrast to boys, is commonly regarded as a sign of early awakened femininity. Not unjustly so; but we must not overlook the fact that what finds expression here is the *active* side of femininity, and that the little girl's preference for dolls is probably evidence of the exclusiveness of her attachment to her mother, with complete neglect of her father-object.

The very surprising sexual activity of little girls in relation to their mother is manifested chronologically in oral, sadistic, and finally even in phallic trends directed towards her. It is difficult to give a detailed account of these because they are often obscure instinctual impulses which it was impossible for the child to grasp psychically at the time of their occurrence, which were therefore only interpreted by her later, and which then appear in the analysis in forms of expression that were certainly not the original ones. Sometimes we come across them as transferences on to the later, father-object, where they do not belong and where they seriously interfere with our understanding of the situation. We find the little girl's aggressive oral and sadistic wishes in a form forced on them by early repression, as a fear of being killed by her mother—a fear which, in turn, justifies her death-wish against her mother, if that becomes conscious. It is impossible to say how often this fear of the mother is supported by an unconscious hostility on the mother's part which is sensed by the girl.[1] (Hitherto, it is only in men that I have found the fear of being eaten up. This fear is referred to the father, but it is probably the product of a transformation of oral aggressivity directed to the mother. The child wants to eat up its mother from whom it has had its nourishment; in the case of the father there is no such obvious determinant for the wish.)

The women patients showing a strong attachment to their mother in whom I have been able to study the pre-Oedipus

[1] [Cf. above, p. 227.]

phase have all told me that when their mother gave them enemas or rectal douches they used to offer the greatest resistence and react with fear and screams of rage. This behaviour may be very frequent or even the habitual thing in children. I only came to understand the reason for such a specially violent opposition from a remark made by Ruth Mack Brunswick, who was studying these problems at the same time as I was, to the effect that she was inclined to compare the outbreak of anger after an enema to the orgasm following genital excitation. The accompanying anxiety should, she thought, be construed as a transformation of the desire for aggression which had been stirred up. I believe that this is really so and that, at the sadistic-anal level, the intense passive stimulation of the intestinal zone is responded to by an outbreak of desire for aggression which is manifested either directly as rage, or, in consequence of its suppression, as anxiety. In later years this reaction seems to die away.

In regard to the passive impulses of the phallic phase, it is noteworthy that girls regularly accuse their mother of seducing them. This is because they necessarily received their first, or at any rate their strongest, genital sensations when they were being cleaned and having their toilet attended to by their mother (or by someone such as a nurse who took her place). Mothers have often told me, as a matter of observation, that their little daughters of two and three years old enjoy these sensations and try to get their mothers to make them more intense by repeated touching and rubbing. The fact that the mother thus unavoidably initiates the child into the phallic phase is, I think, the reason why, in phantasies of later years, the father so regularly appears as the sexual seducer. When the girl turns away from her mother, she also makes over to her father her introduction into sexual life.[1]

[1] [This is the last phase of a long story. When, in his early analyses, Freud's hysterical patients told him that they had been seduced by their father in childhood, he accepted these tales as the truth and regarded the traumas as the cause of their illness. It was not long before he recognized his mistake, and he admitted it in a letter to Fliess of September 21, 1897 (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 69). He soon grasped the important fact that these apparently false memories were wishful phantasies, which pointed the way to the existence of the Oedipus complex. An account of his contemporary reactions to these discoveries is given in Chapter III of his *Autobiographical Study* (1925*d*), *Standard Ed.*,

Lastly, intense *active* wishful impulses directed towards the mother also arise during the phallic phase. The sexual activity of this period culminates in clitoridal masturbation. This is probably accompanied by ideas of the mother, but whether the child attaches a sexual aim to the idea, and what that aim is, I have not been able to discover from my observations. It is only when all her interests have received a fresh impetus through the arrival of a baby brother or sister that we can clearly recognize such an aim. The little girl wants to believe that she has given her mother the new baby, just as the boy wants to; and her reaction to this event and her behaviour to the baby is exactly the same as his. No doubt this sounds quite absurd, but perhaps that is only because it sounds so unfamiliar.

The turning-away from her mother is an extremely important step in the course of a little girl's development. It is more than a mere change of object. We have already described what takes place in it and the many motives put forward for it; we may now add that hand in hand with it there is to be observed a marked lowering of the active sexual impulses and a rise of the passive ones. It is true that the active trends have been affected by frustration more strongly; they have proved totally unrealizable and are therefore abandoned by the libido more readily. But the passive trends have not escaped disappointment either. With the turning-away from the mother clitoridal masturbation frequently ceases as well; and often enough when the small girl represses her previous masculinity a considerable portion of her sexual trends in general is permanently injured too. The transition to the father-object is accomplished with the help of the passive trends in so far as they have escaped the catastrophe. The path to the development of femininity now lies open to the girl, to the extent to which it is not restricted by the remains of the pre-Oedipus attachment to her mother which she has surmounted.

If we now survey the stage of sexual development in the female which I have been describing, we cannot resist coming to a definite conclusion about female sexuality as a whole. We

**20,** 34–5. It was only in the present passage that Freud gave his full explanation of these ostensible memories. He discusses this whole episode at greater length in Lecture XXXIII of his *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*).]

have found the same libidinal forces at work in it as in the male child and we have been able to convince ourselves that for a period of time these forces follow the same course and have the same outcome in each.

Biological factors subsequently deflect those libidinal forces [in the girl's case] from their original aims and conduct even active and in every sense masculine trends into feminine channels. Since we cannot dismiss the notion that sexual excitation is derived from the operation of certain chemical substances, it seems plausible at first to expect that biochemistry will one day disclose a substance to us whose presence produces a male sexual excitation and another substance which produces a female one. But this hope seems no less naïve than the other one—happily obsolete to-day—that it may be possible under the microscope to isolate the different exciting factors of hysteria, obsessional neurosis, melancholia, and so on.

Even in sexual chemistry things must be rather more complicated.[1] For psychology, however, it is a matter of indifference whether there is a single sexually exciting substance in the body or two or countless numbers of them. Psycho-analysis teaches us to manage with a single libido, which, it is true, has both active and passive aims (that is, modes of satisfaction). This antithesis and, above all, the existence of libidinal trends with passive aims, contains within itself the remainder of our problem.

## IV

An examination of the analytic literature on the subject shows that everything that has been said by me here is already to be found in it.[2] It would have been superfluous to publish this paper if it were not that in a field of research which is so difficult of access every account of first-hand experiences or personal

[1] [Cf. the discussion of the chemistry of the sexual processes added in 1920 to the *Three Essays* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, 7, 215, where (in a footnote on the following page) the earlier version from the first edition of the book will also be found.]

[2] [It should be pointed out that recent works by other writers discussed in what follows appeared *after* Freud's earlier paper on 'Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1925*j*), which covered the majority of the points in the present paper but to which he here makes no reference at all. See Editor's Note, p. 223.]

views may be of value. Moreover, there are a number of points which I have defined more sharply and isolated more carefully. In some of the other papers on the subject the description is obscured because they deal at the same time with the problems of the super-ego and the sense of guilt. This I have avoided doing. Also, in describing the various outcomes of this phase of development, I have refrained from discussing the complications which arise when a child, as a result of disappointment from her father, returns to the attachment to her mother which she had abandoned, or when, in the course of her life, she repeatedly changes over from one position to the other. But precisely because my paper is only one contribution among others, I may be spared an exhaustive survey of the literature, and I can confine myself to bringing out the more important points on which I agree or disagree with these other writings.

Abraham's (1921) description of the manifestations of the castration complex in the female is still unsurpassed; but one would be glad if it had included the factor of the girl's original exclusive attachment to her mother. I am in agreement with the principal points in Jeanne Lampl - de Groot's[1] (1927) important paper. In this the complete identity of the pre-Oedipus phase in boys and girls is recognized, and the girl's sexual (phallic) activity towards her mother is affirmed and substantiated by observations. The turning-away from the mother is traced to the influence of the girl's recognition of castration, which obliges her to give up her sexual object, and often masturbation along with it. The whole development is summed up in the formula that the girl goes through a phase of the 'negative' Oedipus complex before she can enter the positive one. A point on which I find the writer's account inadequate is that it represents the turning-away from the mother as being merely a change of object and does not discuss the fact that it is accompanied by the plainest manifestations of hostility. To this hostility full justice is done in Helene Deutsch's latest paper, on feminine masochism and its relation to frigidity (1930), in which she also recognizes the girl's phallic activity and the intensity of her attachment to her mother. Helene Deutsch states further that the girl's turning towards her father takes place *viâ* her passive trends (which have already been awakened in relation to her

[1] The author's name was given when it appeared in the *Zeitschrift* as 'A. Lampl - de Groot', and I correct it here at her request.

mother). In her earlier book (1925) the author had not yet set herself free from the endeavour to apply the Oedipus pattern to the pre-Oedipus phase, and she therefore interpreted the little girl's phallic activity as an identification with her father.

Fenichel (1930) rightly emphasizes the difficulty of recognizing in the material produced in analysis what parts of it represent the unchanged content of the pre-Oedipus phase and what parts have been distorted by regression (or in other ways). He does not accept Jeanne Lampl - de Groot's assertion of the little girl's active attitude in the phallic phase. He also rejects the 'displacement backwards' of the Oedipus complex proposed by Melanie Klein (1928), who places its beginnings as early as the commencement of the second year of life. This dating of it, which would also necessarily imply a modification of our view of all the rest of the child's development, does not in fact correspond to what we learn from the analyses of adults, and it is especially incompatible with my findings as to the long duration of the girl's pre-Oedipus attachment to her mother. A means of softening this contradiction is afforded by the reflection that we are not as yet able to distinguish in this field between what is rigidly fixed by biological laws and what is open to movement and change under the influence of accidental experience. The effect of seduction has long been familiar to us and in just the same way other factors—such as the date at which the child's brothers and sisters are born or the time when it discovers the difference between the sexes, or again its direct observations of sexual intercourse or its parents' behaviour in encouraging or repelling it—may hasten the child's sexual development and bring it to maturity.

Some writers are inclined to reduce the importance of the child's first and most original libidinal impulses in favour of later developmental processes, so that—to put this view in its most extreme form—the only role left to the former is merely to indicate certain paths, while the [psychical] intensities[1]

[1] ['*Intensitäten.*' Freud does not often use the word, as here, without any qualifying epithet. 'Psychische Intensität' occurs very often in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), e.g. *Standard Ed.*, **4**, 306–7 and 330–1. It seems, on the whole, likely that Freud is in fact using the word as an equivalent to the term 'quantity' which he preferred in the earlier 'Project' of 1895 (Freud, 1950*a*). He seems actually to use the two terms as synonyms towards the beginning of Section (2) of his second paper on anxiety neuroses (1895*f*), *Standard Ed.*, **3**. The term 'quantity' is

which flow along those paths are supplied by later regressions and reaction-formations. Thus, for instance, Karin Horney (1926) is of the opinion that we greatly over-estimate the girl's primary penis-envy and that the strength of the masculine trend which she develops later is to be attributed to a *secondary* penis-envy which is used to fend off her feminine impulses and, in particular, her feminine attachment to her father. This does not tally with my impressions. Certain as is the occurrence of later reinforcements through regression and reaction-formation, and difficult as it is to estimate the relative strength of the confluent libidinal components, I nevertheless think that we should not overlook the fact that the first libidinal impulses have an intensity of their own which is superior to any that come later and which may indeed be termed incommensurable. It is undoubtedly true that there is an antithesis between the attachment to the father and the masculinity complex; it is the general antithesis that exists between activity and passivity, masculinity and femininity. But this gives us no right to assume that only one of them is primary and that the other owes its strength merely to the force of defence. And if the defence against femininity is so energetic, from what other source can it draw its strength than from the masculine trend which found its first expression in the child's penis-envy and therefore deserves to be named after it?

A similar objection applies to Ernest Jones's view (1927) that the phallic phase in girls is a secondary, protective reaction rather than a genuine developmental stage. This does not correspond either to the dynamic or the chronological position of things.

equated in the metapsychological paper on 'Repression' (1915*d*) with 'instinctual energy'. See *footnote* 3, p. 153 *above*.]

# SHORTER WRITINGS
(1928–1931)

# DR. REIK AND THE PROBLEM OF QUACKERY[1]

## A LETTER TO THE *NEUE FREIE PRESSE* (1926)

Dear Sir,

In an article in your issue of July 15 dealing with the case of my pupil, Dr. Theodor Reik, or, more precisely, in a section of it headed 'Information from Psycho-Analytic Circles', there is a passage on which I should like to make a few remarks by way of correction.

The passage runs: '. . . during the last few years he has become convinced that Dr. Reik, who has gained a wide reputation from his philosophical and psychological writings, possesses a far greater gift for psycho-analysis than the physicians attached to the Freudian school; and he has entrusted the most difficult cases only to him and to his daughter Anna, who has proved quite specially adept in the difficult technique of psycho-analysis.'

Dr. Reik himself would, I think, be the first to reject any such account of the basis of our relations. It is true, however, that I have availed myself of his skill in particularly difficult cases, but this has only been where the symptoms lay in a sphere far removed from the physical one. And I have never failed to inform a patient that he is not a physician but a psychologist.

My daughter Anna has devoted herself to the pedagogic analysis of children and adolescents. I have never yet referred to her a case of severe neurotic illness in an adult. Incidentally, the only case with moderately severe symptoms verging on the

[1] ['Dr. Reik und die Kurpfuschereifrage.' This letter was published in the *Neue Freie Presse* of Sunday, July 18, 1926 (p. 12). It should have been included in Volume 20 of the *Standard Edition* alongside of Freud's pamphlet on *Lay Analysis* (1926*e*), but it was unfortunately overlooked. The original German seems never to have been reprinted, but an English translation by an unspecified hand appeared in the *Bulletin of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, **4** (1948), 56, where it was wrongly dated 'July 18, 1928'. The present new translation is by James Strachey. An account of the circumstances which led to Freud's writing the letter will be found in the Editor's Note to *Lay Analysis*, *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 180.]

psychiatric which she has hitherto treated repaid the physician who referred it to her by its complete success.

I take the opportunity of informing you that I have just sent to press a small work on *The Question of Lay Analysis* [1926*e*]. In it I have tried to show what a psycho-analysis is and what demands it makes on the analyst. I have considered the far from simple relations between psycho-analysis and medicine, and have drawn the conclusion that any mechanical application to trained analysts of the section against quackery [in the criminal code] is open to grave doubts.

Since I have given up my Vienna practice and have cut down my activity to the treatment of a very few foreigners, I trust that this announcement will not involve me too in a prosecution for unprofessional advertisement.

Yours &c.,

Professor Freud

# DR. ERNEST JONES
## (ON HIS 50th BIRTHDAY)
## (1929)

THE first piece of work that it fell to psycho-analysis to perform was the discovery of the instincts that are common to all men living to-day—and not only to those living to-day but to those of ancient and of prehistoric times. It called for no great effort, therefore, for psycho-analysis to ignore the differences that arise among the inhabitants of the earth owing to the multiplicity of races, languages and countries. From the start it was *international*, and it is well known that its followers overcame the dividing effects of the Great War sooner than any others.

Among the men who met at Salzburg in the spring of 1908 for the first psycho-analytical congress, a young English physician was prominent, who delivered a short paper on 'Rationalization in Everyday Life'. The contents of this first-fruit hold good to this day: our young science was enriched by an important concept and an indispensable term.

From that time on Ernest Jones has never rested. First in his post as a professor in Toronto, then as a physician in London, as the founder and teacher of a Branch Society, as director of a Press, as editor of a Journal, and as head of a Training Institute, he has worked tirelessly for psycho-analysis, making its current findings generally known by means of lectures, defending it against the attacks and misunderstandings of its opponents by means of brilliant, severe but fair criticisms, maintaining its difficult position in England against the demands of the 'profession' [2] with tact and moderation, and, alongside of all these externally directed activities, accomplishing, in loyal co-operation with the development of psycho-analysis on the Continent, the scientific achievement to which, among other

[1] [*Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, **15** (2–3) (1929), 147; *G.S.*, **12** (1934), 395; *G.W.*, **14** (1948), 554. English translation: *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **10** (2–3) (1929), 123. (Tr. unspecified.) The present translation is a modified reprint of the latter. This tribute served as the introduction to double numbers both of the *Zeitschrift* and of the *Journal* in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Ernest Jones's birth on January 1, 1879.]

[2] [In English in the original.]

works, his *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* and *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis* bear witness. Now, in the prime of life, he is not only indisputably the leading figure among English-speaking analysts, but is also recognized as one of the foremost representatives of psycho-analysis as a whole—a mainstay for his friends and, as much as ever, a hope for the future of our science.

Now that the Director of this journal[1] has broken the silence to which he is condemned—or to which he has a right—owing to his age, in order to greet his friend, he may be permitted to conclude—not with a wish, for we do not believe in the omnipotence of thoughts—but with the admission that he cannot think of Ernest Jones, even after his fiftieth birthday, as other than before: zealous and energetic, combative and devoted to the cause.

[1] [Freud was described as '*Herausgeber*' ('Director') both of the *Zeitschrift* and of the *Journal*.]

# THE EXPERT OPINION IN THE HALSMANN CASE[1]
## (1931 [1930])

THE Oedipus complex, as far as we know, is present in childhood in all human beings, undergoes great alterations during the years of development and in many individuals is found in varying degrees of strength even at a mature age. Its essential characteristics, its universality, its content and its fate were recognized, long before the days of psycho-analysis, by that acute thinker Diderot, as is shown by a passage in his famous dialogue, *Le neveu de Rameau*: 'Si le petit sauvage était abandonné à lui-même, qu'il conservât tout son imbécillité, et qu'il réunît au peu de raison de l'enfant au berceau la violence des passions de l'homme de trente ans, il tordrait le cou à son père, et coucherait avec sa mère.'[2]

[1] ['Das Fakultätsgutachten im Prozess Halsmann.' *Psychoan. Bewegung* **3** (1) (1931), 32; *G.S.*, **12** (1934), 412; *Z. Psychoan. Päd.*, **9** (0) (1935), 208; *G.W.*, **14** (1948), 541. The present translation, probably the first into English, is by Angela Richards. A young student, Philipp Halsmann, was brought before an Innsbruck court in 1929, charged with parricide. The court, feeling doubts as to the mental state of the prisoner, asked for an expert opinion from the Innsbruck Faculty of Medicine. The opinion, though it introduced the subjects of the Oedipus complex and of repression, evidently displayed both ignorance and ambivalence towards psycho-analysis. The Innsbruck court found the prisoner guilty, and an appeal to the Appeal Court in Vienna failed on January 21, 1930. Halsmann was, however, subsequently pardoned. Nevertheless Dr. Josef Kupka, Professor of Jurisprudence in the University of Vienna, felt that the young man was left with an undeserved slur on his character and began an active campaign for upsetting the original court decision, in the course of which he published a long article in the *Neue Freie Presse* (November 29 and 30, 1930) criticizing the Innsbruck expert opinion. In preparing his case, Professor Kupka asked for Freud's views on the question, and the present memorandum was the result.]

[2] ['If the little savage were left to himself, preserving all his feebleness and adding to the small sense of a child in the cradle the violent passions of a man of thirty, he would strangle his father and lie with his mother.' Freud quotes the passage here in Goethe's translation. He had quoted it, in the original, a long time before, at the end of Lecture XXI of his *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17), and introduced it again at the end of Part II of the *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]).]

If it had been objectively demonstrated that Philipp Halsmann murdered his father, there would at all events be some grounds for introducing the Oedipus complex to provide a motive for an otherwise unexplained deed. Since no such proof has been adduced, mention of the Oedipus complex has a misleading effect; it is at the least idle. Such disagreements as have been uncovered by the investigation in the Halsmann family between the father and son are altogether inadequate to provide a foundation for assuming in the son a bad relationship towards his father. Even if it were otherwise, we should be obliged to say that it is a far cry from there to the causation of such a deed. Precisely because it is always present, the Oedipus complex is not suited to provide a decision on the question of guilt. The situation envisaged in a well-known anecdote might easily be brought about. There was a burglary. A man who had a jemmy in his possession was found guilty of the crime. After the verdict had been given and he had been asked if he had anything to say, he begged to be sentenced for adultery at the same time—since he was carrying the tool for that on him as well.

In Dostoevsky's great novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, the Oedipus situation stands at the focal point of interest. Old Karamazov has made himself detested by his sons through heartless oppression; in the eyes of one of them he is, in addition, a powerful rival for the woman he desires. This son, Dmitri, makes no secret of his intention to avenge himself on his father by force. It is therefore natural that after his father has been murdered and robbed he should be accused as his murderer and, despite all protestations of his innocence, condemned. And yet Dmitri is innocent; another of the brothers has done the deed. A dictum that has become famous occurs during the trial scene in this novel: 'Psychology is a knife that cuts both ways.' [1]

The Opinion of the Innsbruck Faculty of Medicine seems inclined to attribute an 'effective' Oedipus complex to Philipp Halsmann, but refrains from defining the measure of this

[1] [Freud had quoted this remark not long before in his paper on 'Dostoevsky and Parricide' (1928*b*), p. 189, above, and introduced it again in the paper on 'Female Sexuality' (1931*b*), p. 230*n*. above. The simile actually used in the German and in the Russian original is 'a stick with two ends'. The present version is derived from Constance Garnett's translation.]

effectiveness, since under the pressure of the accusation the necessary conditions for 'an unreserved disclosure' on Phillip Halsmann's part were not fulfilled. When the Faculty go on to refuse even 'on the supposition of the accused being guilty to look for the root of the deed in an Oedipus complex', they are carrying their denial too far without any necessity.

In the same Opinion, we come up against a contradiction which is by no means without significance. The possible influence of emotional shock on the disturbance of memory with regard to impressions before and during the critical time is minimized to the extreme, in my opinion unjustly. The assumptions of an exceptional state of mind or of mental illness are decisively rejected, but the explanation of a 'repression' having taken place in Philipp Halsmann after the deed is readily allowed. I must say, however, that a repression of this kind, occurring out of the blue in an adult who gives no indication of a severe neurosis—the repression of an action which would certainly be more important than any debatable details of distance and the passage of time and which takes place in a normal state or one altered only by physical fatigue—would be a rarity of the first order.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL PSYCHOPATHOLOGY NUMBER OF *THE MEDICAL REVIEW OF REVIEWS*[1] (1930)

DR. FEIGENBAUM has asked me to write a few words for the [number of the] Review of which he is in charge, and I take the opportunity of wishing the best success to his undertaking.

I often hear that psycho-analysis is very popular in the United States and that it does not come up against the same stubborn resistance there as it does in Europe. My satisfaction over this is, however, clouded by several circumstances. It seems to me that the popularity of the name of psycho-analysis in America signifies neither a friendly attitude to the thing itself nor any specially wide or deep knowledge of it. As evidence of the former fact I may point out that, although financial support is to be had easily and in plenty for every kind of scientific and pseudo-scientific enterprise, we have never succeeded in obtaining a backing for our psycho-analytic institutions. Nor is it hard to find evidence for my second assertion. Although America possesses several excellent analysts and, in Dr. A. A. Brill, at least one authority, the contributions to our science from that vast country are exiguous and provide little that is new. Psychiatrists and neurologists make frequent use of psycho-analysis as a therapeutic method, but as a rule they show little interest in its scientific problems and its cultural significance. Quite particularly often we find in American physicians and writers a very insufficient familiarity with psycho-analysis, so that they know only its terms and a few catch-words—though this does not shake them in the certainty of their judgement. And these same men lump psycho-analysis with other systems of thought, which may have developed out

[1] [First published in English in *The Medical Review of Reviews*, **36** (3) (March 1930), 103. (Tr. unspecified.) First German edition, *G.S.*, **12** (1934), 386; reprinted *G.W.*, **14** (1948), 570. The present translation is a new one, by James Strachey.—In *G.S.* the periodical to which this was contributed was wrongly described as '*The Psychoanalytic Review*'. The special 'Psychopathology Number' of *The Medical Review of Reviews* was edited by Dr. Dorian Feigenbaum.]

of it but are incompatible with it to-day. Or they make a hotch-potch out of psycho-analysis and other elements and quote this procedure as evidence of their *broad-mindedness*, whereas it only proves their *lack of judgement*.[1]

Many of these evils which I have mentioned with regret no doubt arise from the fact that there is a general tendency in America to shorten study and preparation and to proceed as fast as possible to practical application. There is a preference, too, for studying a subject like psycho-analysis not from the original sources but from second-hand and often inferior accounts. Thoroughness is bound to suffer from this.

It is to be hoped that works of the kind that Dr. Feigenbaum intends to publish in his Review will be a powerful encouragement to the interest in psycho-analysis in America.

[1] [The words in italics are in English in the original.]

# INTRODUCTION TO EDOARDO WEISS'S *ELEMENTS OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS*[1] (1931 [1930])

THE author of these lectures, my friend and pupil Dr. Edoardo Weiss, has expressed a wish that I should send his work on its way with a few words of recommendation. In doing so I am fully aware that such a recommendation is superfluous. The work speaks for itself. All who know how to appreciate the seriousness of a scientific endeavour, how to value the honesty of an investigator who does not seek to belittle or deny the difficulties, and how to take pleasure in the skill of a teacher who brings light into darkness and order into chaos by his exposition, must form a high estimate of this book and share my hope that it will awaken among cultivated and learned circles in Italy a lasting interest in the young science of psycho-analysis.

Sigm. Freud

[1] [First published in facsimile in E. Weiss's *Elementi di psicoanalisi* Milan, 1931, vi–vii (dated 'Grundlsee, August 1930'); 1933, 2nd ed.; 1937, 3rd ed.; *G.S.*, **12** (1934), 389; *G.W.*, **14** (1948), 573. The present translation, by Angela Richards, appears to be the first into English.]

# PREFACE TO *TEN YEARS OF THE BERLIN PSYCHO-ANALYTIC INSTITUTE*[1] (1930)

THE following pages describe the founding and achievements of the Berlin Psycho-Analytic Institute, to which are allotted three important functions within the psycho-analytic movement. First, it endeavours to make our therapy accessible to the great multitude who suffer under their neuroses no less than the wealthy, but who are not in a position to meet the cost of their treatment. Secondly, it seeks to provide a centre at which analysis can be taught theoretically and at which the experience of older analysts can be handed on to pupils who are anxious to learn. And lastly, it aims at perfecting our knowledge of neurotic illnesses and our therapeutic technique by applying them and testing them under fresh conditions.

An Institute of this kind was indispensable; but we should have waited in vain for assistance from the State or interest from the University in its foundation. Here the energy and self-sacrifice of an individual analyst took the initiative. Ten years ago, Dr. Max Eitingon, now President of the International Psycho-Analytical Association, created an Institute such as this from his own resources, and has since then maintained and directed it by his own efforts. This Report on the first decade of the Berlin Institute is a tribute to its creator and director—an attempt to render him public thanks. Everyone who, in whatever sense, has a share in psycho-analysis will unite in thus thanking him.

[1] [First published in *Zehn Jahre Berliner psycho-analytisches Institut*, Leipzig, Vienna and Zurich, (September) 1930; reprinted *G.S.*, **12** (1934), 388; *G.W.*, **14** (1948), 572. An English translation appeared in *Max Eitingon in Memoriam*, Jerusalem, 1951, 47. The present translation is by James Strachey.—Some years earlier Freud had written a preface (1923*g*) to another pamphlet (by Max Eitingon) reporting on the first two years of the activities of the Berlin Institute (then known as the 'Berlin Psycho-Analytic Policlinic').]

# PREFACE TO HERMANN NUNBERG'S *GENERAL THEORY OF THE NEUROSES ON A PSYCHO-ANALYTIC BASIS*[1] (1932 [1931])

THIS volume by Hermann Nunberg contains the most complete and conscientious presentation of a psycho-analytic theory of neurotic processes which we at present possess. Anyone who is anxious to have the relevant problems simplified and smoothed away will scarcely find satisfaction in this work. But anyone who prefers scientific thinking and can appreciate it as a merit when speculation never abandons the guiding-line of experience and anyone who can enjoy the beautiful diversity of mental happenings—he will value this work and study it assiduously.[2]

VIENNA, *October* 1931.

[1] [First published in H. Nunberg's *Allgemeine Neurosenlehre auf psychoanalytischer Grundlage*, Berne and Berlin, 1932, iii; reprinted *G.S.*, **12** (1934), 390; *G.W.*, **16** (1950), 273. The present translation, the first into English, is by James Strachey.]

[2] [Part of this last sentence was misprinted in the original and had to be corrected by an inserted erratum-slip. The misprint seriously altered the sense. What Freud wrote (as translated above) was: 'Wer aber wissenschaftliches Denken bevorzugt, es als Verdienst zu würdigen weiss, wenn die Spekulation das Leitseil der Erfahrung nie verlässt, und wer die. . . .' The 'wenn' in this sentence was wrongly printed 'wen' and a comma was inserted after 'Spekulation'. As a result of these changes, the sentence might have read in English: 'But anyone who prefers scientific thinking and can appreciate it as a merit, anyone whom speculation, the guiding-line of experience, never abandons, and anyone who. . . .' The corrected version was duly printed in *G.S.*, but the editors of *G.W.*, evidently unaware of the existence of the erratum-slip, have unfortunately restored the original corrupt text.]

# LETTER TO THE BURGOMASTER OF PŘÍBOR[1]
## (1931)

I OFFER my thanks to the Burgomaster of the town of Příbor-Freiberg,[2] to the organizers of this celebration and to all those who are attending it, for the honour they have done me in marking the house of my birth with this commemorative tablet from an artist's hand—and this during my lifetime and while the world around us is not yet agreed in its estimate of my work.

I left Freiberg at the age of three and visited it when I was sixteen, during my school holidays, as a guest of the Fluss family,[3] and I have never returned to it again. Since that time much has befallen me; my labours have been many, I have experienced some suffering and happiness as well, and I have had a share of success—the common medley of human life. At seventy-five it is not easy for me to put myself back into those early times; of their rich experiences but few relics remain in my memory. But of one thing I can feel sure: deeply buried within me there still lives the happy child of Freiberg, the first-born son of a youthful mother, who received his first indelible impressions from this air, from this soil. Thus I may be allowed to end my words of thanks with a heartfelt wish for the happiness of this place and of those who live in it.

[1] ['Brief an den Bürgermeister der Stadt Příbor.' *Psychoan. Bewegung* **3** (6) (1931), 566; *G.S.*, **12** (1934), 414; *G.W.*, **14** (1948), 561. The present translation, probably the first into English, is by James Strachey. —On October 25, 1931, a bronze tablet was unveiled by the Burgomaster of Příbor on the wall of the house in which Freud was born. (See Frontispiece.) The present letter was read on that occasion by Anna Freud. An account of the event is given by Ernest Jones (1957, 172).]

[2] [The town of Příbor is in Moravia, now part of Czechoslovakia. At the time of Freud's birth in 1856 it was known as Freiberg and was included in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.]

[3] [This visit was probably the occasion of the apparently autobiographical episode ascribed to an anonymous character in Freud's early paper on 'Screen Memories' (1899*a*). The boy's age is given there as seventeen, possibly for purposes of disguise.]

# BIBLIOGRAPHY AND AUTHOR INDEX

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*G.S.* = Freud, *Gesammelte Schriften* (12 vols.), Vienna, 1924–30

*G.W.* = Freud, *Gesammelte Werke* (18 vols.), London, from 1944

*C.P.* = Freud, *Collected Papers* (5 vols.), London, 1924–50

*Standard Ed.* = Freud, *Standard Edition* (24 vols.), London, from 1953

*Almanach 1928* = *Almanach für das Jahr 1928*, Vienna, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1927

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*Almanach 1930* = *Almanach der Psychoanalyse*, Vienna, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1929

# GENERAL INDEX

This index includes the names of non-technical authors. It also include, the names of technical authors where no reference is made in the text to specific works. For reference to specific technical works, the Bibliography should be consulted.—The compilation of the index was undertaken by Mrs. R. S. Partridge.


*Absences*, 180
Acropolis, the, 25
Active and passive (*see also* Masculine and feminine), 106 *n.*, 224, 236–7, 239–42
Activity of narcissistic character-types, 218–19
Addiction and masturbation, 193 *n.*
*Adler, A.*, 62, 62 *n.*, 157 *n.* 2
Aesthetic pleasure (*see also* Art), 81–3, 92–4
Aesthetics, theory of, 82–3, 213–14
Affect
  and humour, 162
  and term 'repression', 153
  quota of, 242 *n.*
Affective epilepsy, 181
Aggressiveness (*see also* Death instinct)
  and civilization, 7, 10–12, 61–3, 80 *n.*, 111–15, 117–23, 134 *n.*, 136–8, 142–3, 145
  and narcissism, 218–19
  in children, 113, 129–31, 237–8
  in erotic relationships, 106 *n.*, 171, 218, 220, 234
  in girl's relation to mother, 237–8
  in jokes, 163
  introjected, in the super-ego, 123–132, 137–9, 142
*Agrippa*, 70
Aim-inhibited love (*see* Inhibited aim)
*Alexander, F.* (*see also* Bibliography), 138 *n.* 2
*Alyosha* (in *The Brothers Karamazov*), 189
Ambition and fire, 90 *n.*
Ambivalence, 24, 62, 132–3, 137, 183, 235
Amentia, *Meynert's*, 43
America
  Prohibition in, 49 *n.*
  psycho-analysis in, 254–5
  religion in, 19
American civilization, 116
Amnesia, traumatic, 155
Anaclitic object-choice, 23–4
Anal
  character, 96–7
  erotism, 96–7, 99 *n.*, 106, 113
Analogies
  addiction to narcotics, 49
  barbarian migrations, 177
  bare leg on cold night, 88
  cautious business-man, 84
  cranial index of bandaged heads 47
  garrison in conquered city, 124
  guest who becomes a permanent lodger, 99
  infinitesimal calculus, 36–7
  man with a jemmy, 252
  Minoan-Mycenean civilization, 226
  physiological development, 71
  planet revolving round a central body, 141
  Polar expedition, ill-equipped, 134 *n.*
  prehistoric saurians and crocodile, 68
  Rome, growth of, 69–71
  smallholders on earth and estates in the moon, 50
  stick with two ends, 189 *n.* 1, 230 *n.*, 252 *n.*
*Ananke*, 53, 54 *n.*, 101, 139
Animal gods, 23
Animals, 5–6, 10, 68, 75–6, 89, 99 *n.*, 105 *n.* 3, 123
*Anthropophyteia* (ed. *F. S. Kraus*), 106 *n.*–107 *n.*
Anti-semitism (*see also* Jews), 114–115, 120
Anxiety (*see also* Fear), 16–17, 24, 43, 77, 125, 128, 135, 137, 145, 238

*Apple-Tree, The* (by *J. Galsworthy*), 105 *n.* 2
*Aristotle*, 30, 209
Art (*see also* Aesthetic pleasure; Aesthetics), 79–81, 213–14
  and civilization, 12–14, 93–4, 97
  and religion, 74–5
'As if', philosophy of, 28–9, 35
*Asinaria* (*Plautus*), 111 *n.* 3
Athens, 25
Athletic belt as fetish, 156–7
*Aurelian, the Emperor*, 69
*Ausonius*, 200 and *n.* 1, 201
Auto-erotism (*see* Masturbation)

*Baillet, A.* (*see also* Bibliography), 199–201
Beauty (*see* Aesthetic pleasure)
Berlin Psycho-Analytic Institute, 257
*Bible, the*, 169
Biography and psycho-analysis, 211–212
Birth, trauma of, 155
Bisexuality, 105 *n.* 3, 183–5, 220, 227
*Bloch, I.*, 106 *n.*
Bodensee, 25
*Bonaparte, Princess Marie*, 62–3
*Boniface, St.*, 40
Boys (*see also* Men)
  relation to father, 157, 171, 183–7, 225–6, 229, 231, 235
  relation to mother, 113,183, 193–194, 225, 228–9, 233, 235, 239
Brain defects and epilepsy, 180–1
*Brill, A. A.*, 254
*Brothers Karamazov, The* (by *Dostoevsky*), 175–7, 182, 188–9, 230 *n.*, 252
*Bruck, Moeller van den*, 175
*Brunswick, R. M.* (*see also* Bibliography), 238
*Busch, W.*, 75 *n.*

*Campagne in Frankreich* (by *Goethe*), 210
*Candide* (by *Voltaire*), 75, 80 *n.*
Cannibalism, 10–11
*Carlyle, Thomas*, 133 *n.*
Cases
  of '*Dora*', 90 *n.*, 107 *n.*
  of fetishism, 152, 155–7
  of '*Little Hans*', 62
  of '*Rat Man*', 60–1, 149–50
  of *Schreber*, 66 *n.* 1
Castration
  symbolized by cutting off hair, 157
  threat of, 154, 183, 233
Castration complex, 153–7, 183–5, 229, 233
  in women, 229–30, 232–3, 241
Censorship, 136
Character-types, 83–4, 96–7, 216–20
Chemical factor in sexuality, 240
Childhood impressions
  and instinctual disposition, 9
  as source of fetishism, 149, 155–7
Children (*see also* Infantile)
  aggressiveness in, 113, 129–31, 237–8
  and the family, 102–3
  and parents (*see also* Father; Mother; Oedipus complex; Primal scene), 102–3, 125
  and religion, 47–8, 51–2
  development of super-ego in, 11, 129–31
  education of, 60, 134 *n.*
  helplessness of, 17–18, 23–4, 30, 49, 91
  instinctual impulses of, 10, 129–30
  love in, 231
  neuroses of, 42–3
  over-strictness towards, 130 and *n.* 2
  play of, 236–7
  psycho-analysis of, 247
  sense of guilt in, 125–6, 131
  spoiling of, 130 *n.* 2
Chinese custom of mutilating feet, and fetishism, 157
Christian Science, 120
Christianity, 20, 38, 87, 109, 114, 136, 169, 177
Civilization
  aggressive impulses and, 7, 10–12, 61–3, 80 *n.*, 111–15, 117–23, 134 *n.*, 136–8, 142–3, 145
  art and, 12–14, 79–83, 92–4, 97
  defined, 3–6, 89–96
  development of, compared to that of the individual, 139–44
  evaluation of, 144–5
  hostility of individual to, 6, 9–16, 37, 86–7, 96–7, 104
  moral demands of, 11–12, 15, 18–19, 95, 111, 115, 120, 142–8, 145
  neuroses of, 144

'organic repression' and, 60, 99 *n.*, 105 *n.* 3
pleasure principle as motive force of, 94, 115
presents conflict between Eros and the death instinct, 101–3, 112, 118–19, 122–4, 132–3, 137, 139–41, 143, 145
rational basis for, 40–1, 43–4, 46–7, 53–4
religion and, 18–22, 34–5, 37–9, 43–52, 54, 94, 122, 136
restrictions imposed by, 7–16, 18, 37, 43, 50, 60–1, 86–7, 90 *n.*, 95–7, 103–5, 106 *n.*, 108–9, 112, 115, 126–9, 145
science and, 6, 31, 34–5, 37, 50, 54–6, 77, 79, 87–8, 90–1, 94, 97
sense of guilt and, 61, 134–6
social aspect of, 6–7, 9, 11–12, 40–4, 60, 63, 94–7, 100–9, 132–133, 139–42
Cleanliness
and anal erotism, 96–7
and civilization, 93–4, 97, 99 *n.*
Clitoris, 157, 225, 228–9, 232, 239
*Columbus*, 30
Comic, the (*see also* Humour; Jokes), 162, 165–6
Communism, 112–13, 115, 143
Component instincts, 61, 80 *n.*, 106 *n.*, 119, 139, 220
Compulsion to repeat, 93, 118
Confusional states, 43
Conscience, 123–32, 136–7, 142, 185, 218–19
Consciousness
of anxiety, 135
of guilt, 134–5, 137, 142
Constance (town), 25
Convulsions, hysterical, 179
Corsican vendetta, 40
*Coupeur de nattes*, 157
*Credo quia absurdum*, 28–9, 111
Crime (*see also* Delinquency), 112, 186–7, 190, 220
Criminal tendencies in *Dostoevsky*, 177–9
Crusades, 112
Culture and civilization, 3–4, 6, 89
Cutting off hair as castration symbol, 157

Danger, 24, 72, 124
Dayton 'monkey trial', 38
Death
and disavowal, 155–6
fear of, 182
riddle of, 16–19
simulated in neurotic attacks, 182–3
survival after (*see* Immortality)
Death instinct (*see also* Aggressiveness), 61–3
in conflict with Eros, 101–3, 112, 118–24, 132–3, 137–41, 143, 145
Death-wish, 183
against father, 171, 183, 187
against mother, 237
Defence, 151, 186, 243
humour as, 162–4, 166
neuroses of, 151 *n.*
*Dekker, E. D.*, 54 *n.*
Delinquency (*see also* Crime), 130 *n.* 2
Delusions, 31, 81, 84–5, 227 *n.* 1
of persecution, 165
Dementia praecox, 153 *n.* 2
Demons, 99 *n.*
Depressive states (*see also* Melancholia), 179, 182
*Descartes, R* (*see also* Bibliography), dreams of, 199–204
Destructiveness (*see* Aggressiveness; Death instinct; Self-destruction)
*Deutsch, H.* (*see also* Bibliography), 226–7
*Deutschland* (by *Heine*), 50, 122 *n.* 3
Devil, the, 120
*Diderot*, 251
Disavowal, 43, 104, 150–1, 153–7
Distortion
in dreams, 209
in neurotic symptoms, 165
in religious doctrine, 44
*Dmitri* (in *The Brothers Karamazov*), 189, 252
Dogs and man, 99 *n.*
'*Dora*', case of, 90 *n.*, 107 *n.*
*Dostoevsky, Andrey* (brother to *Fyodor*), 182
*Dostoevsky, Fyodor* (*see also* Bibliography)
and *The Brothers Karamazov*, 175–7, 182, 188–9, 230 *n.*, 252
criminal tendencies of, 177–9
epileptoid attacks of, 176, 179 182, 184–7, 189

*Dostoevsky, Fyodor* (*cont.*)
in Siberia, 182 and *n.*, 186
masochism of, 176, 178–9, 185, 196
morality of, 177–8
neurosis of, 177–9, 182, 188–90, 194–6
Oedipus complex of, 176
passion for gambling of, 176–8, 190–1, 194, 196
relations with his father, 181–2, 185–7
relations with his wife, 178, 190–1
repressed homosexuality of, 184–5
sadism of, 178–9
sense of guilt of, 176, 178, 185–7, 190–1, 196
Dream of Etruscan grave (*Freud's*), 17
Dream-interpretation, 201–4
Dreams
and the unconscious, 203, 209
*Aristotle* on, 209
distortion in, 209
'from above', 203
of *Descartes'*, 199–204
wish-fulfilment in, 17
Dream-work, 17

*Eckstein, F.* (*see also* Bibliography), 175–6
Economic factors in civilization, 6–7, 10, 104
Economics of the libido, 78–9, 80 *n.*, 83, 84 *n.* 2, 141
Economy in expenditure, and humour, 161–2
Ecstasy, 163
Education, 8–9, 47–9, 51–2, 54, 60, 134 *n.*
Ego, 65–6, 164
and external world, 66–8, 72, 162–3
and id, 66, 143
and objects, 66–7, 102, 164–5
and super-ego, 123–6, 129, 130 *n.* 2, 136–7, 143, 164–5, 185–6, 218–19
as reservoir of libido, 118
desires omnipotence, 121
in neuroses and psychoses, 155–6, 179
masochism of, 136, 185
narcissistic organization of, 118, 121, 162
splitting of, 150–1
Ego-development, 66, 68
Ego-feeling, 66, 68, 72
Ego-instincts (*see also* Death instinct; Self-preservative instinct), 117–118
Ego-libido, 63, 118, 141
*Einstein, A.*, 3
*Eitingon, M.*, 195 *n.* 2, 257
Electra complex, 229
Enemas, 238
Epilepsy, 179–81, 189–90
Epileptoid attacks of *Dostoevsky*, 176, 179–82, 184–7, 189
Erect posture of man, 60, 90 *n.* 106 *n.*
Eros (*see also* Libido; Sexual instinct), 108, 210
in conflict with death-instinct, 101–3, 112, 118–24, 132–3, 137–41, 143, 145
Erotic character-type, 83, 217–20
Ethics (*see* Morality)
Excretory
function, 97, 99 *n.*
organs and sexual organs, proximity between, 106 *n.*, 107 *n.*
External world (*see also* Reality principle)
disavowal of, 43, 104, 150–1, 153–7
ego and, 66–8, 72, 162–3
fulfils repressed wish, 186
man's control over, 49, 52, 55–6, 72, 77–94, 101, 121, 145, 212, 236
religion and knowledge of, 25, 31–4, 53, 75
repudiated by super-ego, in humour, 166

Family, the, 99 and *n.*, 101–3, 114, 122, 132–3
Fate, 16, 18, 36, 50, 82, 126–7, 185, 188, 194
Father
child's relation to, 30, 43, 125, 129–30, 164, 183–6, 226, 229, 235
daughter's attachment to, 225–8, 230–1, 233, 237–9, 241–3
death of, and disavowal, 155–6
death-wish against (*see also* Parricide), 171, 183, 185–7
equated with forces of nature, 17

equated with God, 17–19, 22–4, 30, 42, 49, 74, 127, 171
fear of, 17, 24, 184–5, 194, 237
primal, 42, 100–1 131–3, 136–7, 141–2, 186
son's identification with, 157, 163, 183–6
son's rivalry with, 171, 183, 225, 231
*Faust* (*Goethe*), 120 *n.* 4, 209, 212 *n.* 2
Fear
of being found out, 125
of being killed by the mother, 227, 237
of castration (*see* Castration complex)
of conscience, 218
of death, 182
of the father, 17, 24, 184–5, 194, 237
of female genitals, 154–5, 229
of feminine attitude, 184
of loss of love, 124–8, 218
of punishment, 124, 128, 184
*Feigenbaum, D.*, 254–5
Feminine (*see* Masculine and feminine)
Feminism, 230 *n*
Fetish
athletic belt as, 156–7
equated with the mother's missing penis, 152–5
foot as, 149–50, 155, 157
fur as, 155
nose as, 152
penis as prototype of, 157
shine on nose as, 152
shoe as, 155
underclothes as, 155
velvet as, 155
Fetishism
contrary ideas expressed in, 156–7
in primitive societies, 127
splitting of the ego in, 150–1
Fire
as phallic symbol, 90 *n.*
man's control over, 90 and *n.*
*First Melon I ever Stole, The* (by *Mark Twain*), 126 *n.* 2
*Fliess, W.*, 60, 107 *n.*, 126 *n* 2., 151 *n.*, 182 *n.* 2, 193 *n.* 1, 225 *n.*, 238 *n.*
*Fluss* family, 259
*Fontane, T.*, 75
Foot as symbol for female genitals, 150
Foot-fetishism, 149–50, 155, 157
Forgetting (*see also* Amnesia; Memory), 69
*Foucault, J. B. L.*, 26
*Francis of Assisi, St.*, 102
Frankfurt, 206–8
*Frederick the Great*, 83 *n.* 2
Freedom, desire for, 95–6, 105
Freiberg, 259
French Revolution, 46
*Freud, Amalie*, 259
*Freud, Anna*, 160, 206–7, 259 *n.* 1
*Freud's*
birthplace, 259
lack of religious faith, 169–70
*Fromme Helene, Die* (by *W. Busch*), 75 *n.* 2
Frustration of instinct, cultural, 10, 87, 97, 108, 126, 130 *n.* 2, 131, 138
*Fülöp-Miller, R.* (*see also* Bibliography), 175–6
Fur as fetish, 155

*Galsworthy, John*, 105 *n.* 2
Gambling, 176, 178, 190–4
*Gargantua* (*Rabelais*), 90 *n.*
*Garnett, Constance*, 189 *n.* 1, 252 *n.*
*Gedanken und Einfälle* (*Heine*), 110 *n.*
Genitals
and man's erect posture, 99 *n.*, 106 *n.*
and sense of smell, 99 *n.*, 106 *n.*
exciting, but not beautiful, 83
Genitals, female
and castration fear, 154–5, 229
boy's curiosity about, 150, 155
fetish as symbol for, 150, 154
*George, Stefan*, 206
German desire for world-dominion, 115
Girls (*see also* Women)
attitude to father, 225–31, 233, 237–9, 241–3
attitude to mother, 224–8, 230–9, 241–2
phallic phase in, 232, 237–9, 241–243
God
and the Devil, 120
belief in, 32–4, 37–41, 46–7, 52–4, 85, 169–71, 187, 202
equated with father, 17–19, 22–4, 30, 42, 49, 74, 127, 171
man's likeness to, 91–2, 120

Gods
and demons, 99 *n.*
animal, 23
of antiquity, 17–19, 24, 91
*Goethe*, 74–5, 76 *n.* 1, 120 *n.* 2, 120 *n.* 4, 133, 206–12, 251 *n.* 2
Goethe House, 206, 208
Goethe Prize, 206
*Grabbe, C. D.*, 65 *n.* 2
Grand Inquisitor, the (in *The Brothers Karamazov*), 177, 188
Groups, 'psychological poverty' of, 115–16
Guilt, sense of, 61, 123–8, 131–9, 176, 183, 185, 188–90, 210, 240
in children, 125–6, 131
in *Dostoevsky*, 176, 178, 185–7, 190–191, 196
unconscious, 135, 137, 139, 142, 183
*Gulliver's Travels*, 90 *n.*

*Hadrian, the Emperor*, 70
Hair, cutting off, as castration symbol, 157
Hallucinations, 43, 169, 171
*Halsmann, Philipp*, 189 *n.* 2, 251–3
*Hamlet*, 134 *n.*, 188–9
*Hannibal* (by *C. D. Grabbe*), 65 *n.* 2
'*Hans, Little*', case of, 62
Happiness (*see* Pleasure principle)
subjectivity of, 89
*Heine*, 50, 110 *n.*, 122 *n.* 3
*Helmholtz, H.*, 180
Helplessness
of children, 17–18, 23–4, 30, 49, 91
of man before nature, 17–18, 22–24, 30, 49, 86, 124
*Herder, Frau*, 210
*Hitler, Adolf*, 145 *n.*
Homosexuality, 90 *n.*, 154, 184–5, 229–30
House as womb symbol, 91
Humour (*see also* Comic; Jokes)
and economy in expenditure, 161–2
defensive function of, 162–4, 166
first and second person in, 161–2
role of super-ego in, 160, 164–6
yield of pleasure from, 161–2, 166
Hunger as type of ego-instinct, 117
Hysteria, 179, 181, 220, 227 ,240
Hysterical
attacks, 176, 181
convulsions, 179
phantasy, 238 *n.*
symptoms, 185, 187
Hystero-epilepsy, 179, 181

Id, the, 66, 143, 155, 218
Ideals, cultural, 12–14, 94–5, 97, 109, 144–5
Identification, 13–14, 129, 132, 157, 163, 182–3, 190, 242
son's, with father, 157, 163, 183–6
Idiocy and epilepsy, 180
Illusion
art as, 75, 80–1
cultural ideals as, 145
humour as, 166
religious doctrine as, 30–4, 43, 49, 51–6, 64, 84–5
Immortality, 19, 28, 30, 33–4, 50, 54, 143, 169
Incest, taboo on, 104
Incestuous impulses, 10–13, 23 60–61, 104, 209
Inertia, psychical, 108
Infantile (*see also* Childhood; Children)
sexual theories, 150, 152–7, 171, 223, 229, 240
sexuality, 31, 104, 229, 231, 234–5
Infantilism, psychical, and religion, 84–5
Inhibited aim, 102–3, 109, 112, 118, 121, 231
Initiation rites, 103
Innsbruck, 251 *n.* 1, 252–3
International Psycho-Analytical Congress of 1927 at, 160
Instincts (*see also* Component instincts; Death instinct; Ego-instincts; Self-preservative instinct; Sexual instinct)
conservative character of, 118 and *n.*
dominance of, 46–9, 51, 53, 143
frustration of, 10, 87, 97, 108, 126, 130 *n.* 2, 131, 138
intelligence and, 48–9, 51, 53
pressure of civilization on, 7–16, 18, 37, 43, 50, 60–1, 86–7, 90 *n.*, 95–7, 103–5, 106 *n.* 108–9, 112, 115, 126–9, 145
relation of libido to, 121 *n.* 1
repression and, 42–3
sublimation of, 79, 80 *n.*, 84, 97, 103, 106 *n.*, 179

theory of, 106 *n.*, 117, 249
wealth and satisfaction of, 6–7
Instinctual
character, 179
demands of the id, 218
discharge in epilepsy, 180–1
energy, 242 *n.*
impulses, 68–9, 78–80, 84, 95, 105 *n.* 3, 126, 132, 136–7, 153 *n.* 4
Intellectual work, 79, 94
Intelligence
impaired in epilepsy, 179–80
intimidated by religion, 84–5
primacy of, over instincts, 48–9, 51, 53
International Psycho-Analytical Association, 257
International Psycho-analytical Congress
of 1927 at Innsbruck, 160
of 1908 at Salzburg, 249
Interpretation of dreams, 201–4
Intoxication, 75, 78, 84, 163
Introjection of aggressive impulses, 123–32, 137–9, 142
*Iphigenie* (*Goethe*), 210
*Isaacs, Susan*, 138 *n.* 2
Isola Bella, 93
Israel, people of, 127
*Ivan the Terrible*, 177

*Janet, P.*, 115 *n.*
Jealousy, 231, 239
delusional, 227 *n.* 1
*Jenghiz Khan*, 112
Jerusalem, capture of, 112
*Jesus Christ*, 142, 169, 171, 187
equated with primal father, 136 142
Jews, 19, 89, 114–15, 120, 127, 170
Jokes (*see also* Comic; Humour), 162–3, 165–6
*Jones, Ernest* (*see also* Bibliography), 138 *n.* 2, 249–50
*Jung, C. G.* (*see also* Bibliography), 118
Justice, 95–6, 104, 112, 113 *n.* 2

*Klein, Melanie* (*see also* Bibliography), 130 *n.* 1, 138 *n.* 2
'*Kraft*' (in *Goethe's* letters), 210
*Krauss, F. S.*, 106 *n.*–107 *n.*
*Kupka, J.*, 251 *n.* 1

*Lampl - de Groot, J.* (*see also* Bibliography), 226–7, 241 *n.*
*Last, H.*, 69 *n.* 2
Latency period, 60
Laughter, 166
Lay analysis, 247–8
Leadership, 8–9, 141
Legends, 90 *n.*
*Leibnitz*, 200
*Leonardo da Vinci*, 150, 153 *n.* 1, 157 *n.* 1, 208, 212 *n.* 1
*Leroy, M.* (*see also* Bibliography), 199–204
Libido (*see also* Eros; Sexual instinct)
and character-types, 217–20
communities united by, 108–9, 122, 139
displaceability of, 79, 82, 84, 97, 103–4, 106 *n.*, 108, 231
economics of, 78–9, 80 *n.*, 83, 84 *n.* 2, 141
ego-, 63, 118, 141
narcissistic, 24, 80 *n.*, 118
object-, 63, 84 *n.* 2, 117–18, 141
phases of, in female sexuality, 236, 239–40, 242–3
theory, 62–3, 117–18, 121, 218
Life instinct (*see* Eros)
*Life of a Great Sinner, The* (by *Dostoevsky*), 178
*Liluli* (by *Romain Rolland*), 65 *n.* 1
Literature, creative, 175–7, 188–9, 191, 193, 196, 211–14
'*Little Hans*', case of, 62
London, 71, 249
*Louis XIV*, 93
Love
and civilization, 82 ,101–3 ,108–9, 112
and the pleasure principle, 82, 101–3, 108–9, 112
fear of loss of, 124–8, 218
in childhood, 231
of mankind, 102, 109–12, 114, 142–3, 178
sexual (*see also* Sexual instinct), 82, 101–3, 108–9, 117, 119–20
state of being in, 66, 164–5, 234
various meanings of word, 102
with inhibited aim (*see* Inhibited aim)

Mania, 78, 165
Marriage, 105, 230–1, 234

Masculine and feminine (*see also* Active and passive), 105 *n.* 3, 107 *n.*, 183–5, 228, 232, 236, 240, 243
Masculinity complex, 230 and *n.*, 242
Masochism, 119, 241
*Dostoevsky's*, 176, 178–9, 185, 196
of ego, 136, 185
Masses, the
and civilization, 7–9, 12–13, 52
and religion, 37–9, 52, 74–5
Masturbation, 176, 196, 232–3
and addictions, 193 *n.*
clitoridal, 232, 239
gambling replaces, 193–4, 196
in girls, 232–3, 239, 241
Medicine and psycho-analysis, 247–248
Melancholia (*see also* Depressive states), 165, 240
Memory (*see also* Forgetting)
and phantasy, 238 *n.*
influence of shock on, 253
Memory-trace, 69
Men (*see also* Boys)
civilization the business of, 103–4
role of, in family life, 99, 101, 103–4
sexual development in, 226–32, 241
Menstruation, 99 *n.*
*Mephistopheles* (in *Goethe's Faust*), 120 *n.* 4, 212 and *n.* 2
Messiah, the, 31
*Meynert's* amentia, 43 *n.* 3
*Michel, Dr.*, 207
Micturition and fire, 90 *n.*
*Mitya* (in *The Brothers Karamazov*), 230 *n.*
*Moira*, 18
Monarchy, 48 *n.* 2, 177, 187
'Monkey trial' at Dayton, Tennessee, 38 and *n.* 2
Monogamy, 105
Morality
and civilization, 11–12, 15, 18–19, 95, 111, 115, 120, 142–3, 145
and education, 13
and religion, 18, 33, 37–8, 143
and sense of guilt, 124–6
in *Dostoevsky*, 177, 196 *n.* 1
Mother
absence of penis in, 152–5
and child, 24, 113, 236
boy's relation to, 113, 183, 193–4, 225, 228–9, 233, 235, 239
death-wish against, 237
fear of being devoured by, 227, 237
girl's relation to, 224–8, 230–9, 241–2
phantasy of sexual initiation by, 193–4
woman's corpse arouses memory of, 170–1
Mourning, 186
'*Multatuli*' (*E. D. Dekker*), 54 *n.*
Murderous impulses (*see also* Parricide), 10–12, 15, 23, 39–42, 190
Mysticism, 72–3
Myths, 44–5, 142

*Napoleon I*, 93
Narcissism, 16, 62, 118, 121, 143, 162, 190
and cultural ideals, 13–14
'of minor differences', 114
Narcissistic
attachment to penis, 153, 229
character-type, 83–4, 217–19
libido, 24, 80 *n.*, 118
Nature, man and the forces of, 15–19, 21–2, 86, 88, 90–4, 121
*Nero, the Emperor*, 70
*Neue Freie Presse*, 247–8, 251 *n.* 1
Neurasthenia, 60
Neuroses (*see also* Hysteria; Obsessional neurosis; Transference neuroses; Traumatic neuroses)
as outcome of conflict between ego- and object-instincts, 118
as substitute satisfaction, 84, 109
compared to psychoses, 153 *n.* 2
conceal unconscious sense of guilt, 139
infantile, 42–3
of defence, 151 *n.*
preconditions of, 184, 219–20, 226
religion and, 42–4, 46, 53
result from pressure of civilization, 87
study of, 135, 142–3, 257–8
Neurotic symptoms (*see* Symptoms)
Neurotics, 10–11, 106 *n.*, 115 *n.*, 182 *n.* 1
*Neveu de Rameau, Le* (by *Diderot*), 251
Normal mental processes, 135, 144, 165, 185, 208, 217, 219–20

Nose as fetish, 152
*Novoe Vremya*, 181 *n.* 2
*Nunberg, H.* (*see also* Bibliography), 258

Object-choice
  anaclitic, 23–4
  in boys and girls compared, 228–229, 231–3
  in fetishism, 152
  in suckling, 67
  incestuous, 61, 104, 209
  restricted by civilization, 104
Object-instincts, 117–18
Object-libido, 63, 84 *n.* 2, 117–18, 141
Object-relation
  ambivalence of, 62, 235
  in state of being in love, 66, 101–102, 117, 164–5
Obsessional character-type, 217–20
Obsessional neurosis, 43, 135, 137, 156, 220, 235, 240
  and religion, 42–4, 46, 53
'Oceanic' feeling as basis of religion, 64–5, 72
Oedipus complex (*see also* Pre-Oedipus phase), 183–4, 186, 225–6, 228–9, 238 *n.*, 251
  and the *Halsmann* case, 251–3
  and religion, 43, 170–1
  and sense of guilt, 131–2
  in *Dostoevsky*, 176, 252
  in *Hamlet*, 188–9
*Oedipus Rex* (*Sophocles*), 188
Olfactory stimuli (*see* Smell, sense of)
*Olympica* (MS. by *Descartes*), 199–200
Omnipotence, ego's desire for, 121
Oral erotism, 237
Order
  and anal erotism, 96–7
  and civilization, 93–4, 97
Organic
  disease, 179–81
  repression, 60, 99 *n.*, 105 and *n.* 3
Organ-inferiority, 157 *n.* 2
Orgasm and enemas, 238
Over-strictness to children, 130 and *n.* 2
*Oxford, Edward de Vere, Earl of*, 211

Pain (*see also* Unpleasure), 67, 76–7
*Painfull Aduentures of Pericles Prince of Tyre, The* (by *G. Wilkins*), 91 *n.*
*Paquet, A.*, 206–7
Paranoia, 81, 165, 227
Parental agency, super-ego as heir to, 61, 125–6, 132, 164, 166, 184–5, 229
Parents and children (*see also* Father; Mother), 102–3, 125
Parricide, 183, 251–3
  against primal father, 42, 100, 131–3, 136–7, 141–2, 183, 186
  in literature, 188–90
Parsimony, 12
  and anal erotism, 96, 113
Passive sexual attitude (*see also* Active and passive; Masculine and feminine), 185
*Paul, St.*, 114
Penis, 228
  absence of, in women, 150, 152–7, 229
  as prototype of fetish, 155, 157
  narcissistic attachment to, 153, 229
Penis-envy, 243
Perception, 153–4
*Pericles*, 91 *n.*
Periodicity, sexual, 99 *n.*
Persecution, delusions of, 165
Perversion, 79, 104, 157, 179
Phallic phase in girls, 232, 237–9, 241–3
Phallic symbol
  fetish as, 155, 157
  fire as, 90 *n.*
Phantasy
  and art, 79, 80–1
  and memory, 238 *n.*
  expresses death-wish, 185–6
  fulfilled in reality, 186
  hysterical, 238 *n.*
  masturbation, 232
  of seduction, 232, 238 and *n.*
  of sexual initiation by mother, 193–4
*Plato*, 210
*Plautus*, 111 *n.* 3
Play of children, 236–7
Pleasure principle, 67, 76–89, 94, 102, 115, 140–1, 145, 161–3
*Plessing, Prof.*, 210
Preconscious and jokes, 165
Pre-Oedipus phase, 224, 226, 227 *n.* 1, 230, 235, 237–9, 241–2
Příbor, 259
Primaeval man (*see also* Primal father), 38, 42, 90 *n.*, 113, 115, 123, 131, 249

Primal
father, killing of, 42, 100–1, 115, 131–3, 136–7, 141–2, 183, 186
horde, 100 *n.*
scene, 171, 242
Primary process, 154
Primitive races, 22, 38, 86–7, 127, 234–5
Privation, instinctual, 10, 16, 18
Prohibitions, cultural, 10–12, 15, 23, 26, 40–2, 48, 51, 104
Psychical
energy, 103, 164–5
inertia, 108
infantilism, 84–5
intensity, 242 and *n.*, 243
Psycho-analysis
and biography, 211–12
and medicine, 247–8
findings of, 138–9, 184
in America, 254–5
of children, 247
therapeutic aspect of, 45, 144, 257
Psychoses (*see also* Dementia praecox; Mania; Melancholia; Paranoia)
as defence, 81, 84, 163
'holy awe' of, 190
narcissism and, 118, 220
religion and, 171
Puberty, 228, 233
phantasies, 193
rites, 103
Pubic hair symbolized by fur and velvet, 155
Punishment
aggressiveness in children the result of, 130
castration equated with, 185, 233
fear of, 124, 128, 184
need for, 123, 127–8, 135–7, 185–187
self-, 126, 183, 191, 194
symptoms as, 139
*Pythagoras*, 201

Quackery, 247–8
Quantity, 165, 242 *n.*

*Rabelais*, 90 *n.*
'*Rat Man*', case of, 60–1, 149–50
Rationalization, 249
Reaction-formation, 243
Reality principle (*see also* External world), 67, 77, 79–80
Reality-testing, 80
Regression, 163, 231, 242–3
*Reik, T.* (*see also* Bibliography), 138 *n.* 2, 176, 195–6, 247–8
Religion
and after-life (*see* Immortality)
and art, 74–5
and civilization, 18–22, 34–5, 37–39, 43–52, 54, 94, 122, 136
and education, 48–9, 51–2, 54
and inhibited aim, 102
and morality, 18, 33, 37–8, 143
and obsessional neurosis, 42–4, 46, 53
and Oedipus complex, 43, 170–1
and psychosis, 171
and science, 38–9, 52, 55, 74–5, 88
and sublimation, 57
as alternative to neurosis, 85
as answer to the riddle of life, 75–6
as consolation, 32, 35, 49, 52, 54, 72, 74–5, 85
as mass-delusion, 81, 84–5
as wish-fulfilment, 30–1, 35, 42–3, 52
justification for belief in, 25–9, 32, 37–8
'oceanic' feeling as basis for, 64–5, 72
origins of, 15–24
Religious
conversion, 169–72
doctrines, as illusions, 30–4, 43, 49, 51–6, 64, 84–5
faith, *Freud's* lack of, 169–70
Remorse, 131–2, 134, 136–7, 177
Repeat, compulsion to, 93, 118
Repressed wish fulfilled by reality, 186
Repression, 43–4, 97, 118, 139, 184–5, 226, 231, 237, 253
and disavowal, 153
and neurosis, 226
and scotomization, 153
of affect, 153–4
'organic', 60, 99 *n.*, 105 *n.* 3
splitting of ego in, 151
Revenge, 129–30
*Riviere, Joan*, 60
*Robespierre*, 46
*Rolland, Romain*, 25 *n.* 3, 64–5
Romans, religion of, 114
Rome, 69–71
*Rousseau, J. J.*, 125 *n.* 1

Russia, 9, 46, 112–13, 115, 143, 177

Sadism, 61–2, 106 *n.*, 112, 117, 119, 121, 237
  in *Dostoevsky*, 178–9
Saintliness, 126, 128
Salzburg, 249
Salzkammergut, *Freud* in, 206
*Schiller*, 73, 117
*Schreber, Senatspräsident*, case of, 66 *n.* 1
*Schweitzer, Albert*, 206
Science
  and civilization, 6, 31, 34–5, 37, 50, 54–6, 77, 79, 87–8, 90–1, 94, 97
  and religion, 38–9, 52, 55, 74–5, 88
'Scotomization', 153 and *n.* 2, 154–6
Security, civilization and, 105 *n.* 1, 115
Seduction, 232, 238, 243
  phantasy of, 232, 238 and *n.*
Self-destruction, 145
Self-preservative instinct, 62, 117–118, 218
Self-punishment, 126, 183, 191, 194
*Septimius Severus, the Emperor*, 70
Sex-distinction, infantile theories of, 150, 152–7, 223, 229, 242
Sexual aim, 101, 106 *n.*, 235–6, 239
  inhibited, 102–3, 109, 112, 118, 121, 231
Sexual assault on immature girl, 178 and *n.*
Sexual development
  in females, 223–4, 226–43
  in males, 226–32, 241
Sexual discharge, 181
Sexual excitation, 99 *n.*, 240
Sexual instinct (*see also* Eros; Libido)
  and the death instinct, 61–2, 117–19, 138–9
  and education, 134 *n.*
  as source of pleasure, 82, 101–3
  restricted by civilization, 15, 60, 103–5, 108–9, 112, 145
Sexual intercourse
  compared to epilepsy, 180–1
  parental, 171, 242
  repugnance to, 106 *n.*
Sexual periodicity, 99 *n.*
Sexual potency and fire, 90 *n.*
Sexual satisfaction, 82, 101–2, 105, 106 *n.*
  in fetishism, 154
Sexual theories of children, 150, 152–7, 171, 223, 229, 240
*Shakespeare*, 91 *n.*, 93, 134 *n.*, 177
  authorship of the works, 211
Shame, 99 *n.*
Shoe as fetish, 155
Siberia, *Dostoevsky* in, 182 and *n.*, 186
Sight replaces smell as dominant sense, 60, 99 *n.*
Smell, sense of
  and fetishism, 150
  and sexual instinct, 99 *n.*, 106 *n.*
  replaced by sight as dominant sense, 60, 99 *n.*, 106 *n.*
Social
  aspect of civilization, 6–7, 9, 11–12, 40–4, 60, 63, 94–7, 100–9, 132–3, 139–42
  aspect of cleanliness, 93–4, 97, 99 *n.*
  character of women, 230 *n.*
Socialism, 143
*Soloviev, V. S.*, 182
*Sophocles*, 188
*Spinoza*, 50 *n.*
Spiritualism, 27–8
Spoiling of children, 130 *n.* 2
*Stavrogin's Confession* (by *Dostoevsky*), 178 *n.*
*Stein, Charlotte von*, 209 *n.* 2, 210
Stimuli, sensory (*see* Olfactory stimuli; Visual stimuli)
Stork myth, 44–5
*Strakhov, N.* (*see also* Bibliography), 187 *n.* 2
Stratford-on-Avon, 93, 211
Sublimation
  of instincts, 79, 80 *n.*, 84, 97, 103, 106 *n.*, 179
  religion and, 57
  work as, 80 *n.*
Suckling and breast, 66–7, 91, 234, 236
Super-ego
  and ego, 123–6, 129, 130 *n.* 2, 136–7, 143, 166, 185–6, 218–19
  and humour, 160, 164–6
  as internalized external authority, 11, 61, 125–6, 132, 136–8, 164, 166, 184–5, 229
  cultural, 141–4
  sense of guilt equated with, 135
  severity of, 123, 125, 129–30, 136–138, 142–3, 164–6, 185–7

*Suvorin, A. S.*, 181 *n.* 2
*Swift, Jonathan*, 90 *n.*
Symbol
  cutting off hair as, 157
  fire as, 90 *n.*
  foot as, 150
  fur as, 155
  house as, 91
  phallic, 90 *n.*, 155, 157
  shoe as, 155
  Tsar as, 177, 186–7
  velvet as, 155
Sympathy, 190, 210
Symptoms, neurotic,
  anxiety always lies behind, 135
  as substitute satisfactions, 108, 139
  distortion in, 165
  mechanism of, 185, 187

Taboo
  as origin of law, 101
  on incest, 104
  on menstruation, 99 *n.*
*Tamerlane*, 112
*Taucher, Der* (by *Schiller*), 73
*Tertullian*, 28 *n.*
Toilet, as source of genital excitement, 232, 238
Toronto, 249
Totem
  animal, 23
  meal, 23, 186
Totemism, 22–3, 42, 100–1, 104
Toxic factors (*see also* Intoxication), 180
Transference neuroses, 118
Trauma
  and humour, 162
  and neurosis, 182, 238 *n.*, 253
  *of birth*, 155
Traumatic
  amnesia, 155
  neuroses, 118
Tsar as father symbol, 177, 186–7
*Twain, Mark*, 126 *n.* 2

Uncanny, the, 17
Unconscious, the
  dreams and, 203, 209
  epilepsy and, 180
  the id and, 66
Unconscious
  mental processes, 103, 154, 184, 188
  revision, in jokes, 165
  sense of guilt, 135, 137, 139, 142, 183
Underclothes as fetish, 155
Unpleasure, 67–8, 76–83, 86
Urethral erotism, 90 *n.*

Vagina, 225, 228
*Vaihinger, H.* (*see also* Bibliography), 30
Velvet as fetish, 155
*Vie de Ramakrishna, La* (by *Romain Rolland*), 65 *n.* 1
*Vie de Vivekananda, La* (by *Romain Rolland*), 65 *n.* 1
Vienna, 93, 248, 251 *n.* 1
Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society, 150, 212 *n.* 1
*Viereck, G. S.* (*see also* Bibliography), 168–9
*Vierundzwanzig Stunden aus dem Leben einer Frau* (by *S. Zweig*), 191–4
*Vinci, Leonardo da* (see *Leonardo da Vinci*)
Visual stimuli, 60, 99 *n.*, 153–4
*Voltaire*, 75, 80 *n.*

*Wahlverwandtschaften, Die* (*Goethe*), 210
War of 1914–18, 112, 249
Wealth, distribution of, 6–7, 10, 12, 21, 113, 143
*Weiss, E.* (*see also* Bibliography), 256
*Weltweisen, Die* (by *Schiller*), 117 *n.* 2
*Wilhelm Meister* (*Goethe*), 133
*Wilkins, George*, 91 *n.*
Wish-fulfilment
  in delusions, 81
  in dreams, 17
  in illusions, 80
  in religion, 30–1, 35, 42–3, 52
Womb, house as symbol of, 91
Women (*see also* Girls)
  as analysts, 226–7, 230 *n.*
  in opposition to civilization, 103–4
  intelligence of, 48
  role of, in family life, 99, 101, 103
  sexual development of, 223–4, 226–43
  social character of, 230 *n.*
Work
  aversion to, 8, 80
  dependance of civilization on, 6–8, 10, 12, 99, 100
  intellectual, 79, 94
  yield of pleasure, from, 79–80, 80 *n.*

Yoga, 72–3, 79

*Zahme Xenien* (*Goethe*), 74–5
*Ziegler, L.*, 206
*Zossima, Father* (in *The Brothers Karamazov*), 189
*Zweig, Stefan* (*see also* Bibliography), 176, 178 *n.*, 191–6